



# The Beaver

WINTER 1960



THE UNCHANGED STANDARD: "choice goods as can be bought for money"

"You are to send us home by every one of our Ships all such goods as are defective or not acceptable to the Nation and to inform us wherein they are defective And also to direct us exactly as you see of what form, quality & conditions every sort of goods wch. is demanded there ought to be for the best satisfaction the Indians, And wee will do our utmost that you shall be supplied with every species of Commodity in perfection."

LETTER TO GOVERNOR NIXON FROM THE GOVERNOR AND COMMITTEE, LONDON, MAY 21, 1680

**Hudson's Bay Company**

INCORPORATED 21<sup>ST</sup> MAY 1607





# The Beaver

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Eskimo Festivities

By Ed McNally

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Bust in Fulham stone  
by John Dwight, contemporary  
of Prince Rupert



# Prince Rupert

ARTIST AND PATRON OF THE ARTS

*The first Governor of the Company of  
Adventurers of England Trading into  
Hudson's Bay was a man of many talents.*

BY P. H. HULTON  
*Assistant Keeper of Prints and  
Drawings at the British Museum.*

IN 1636, at the age of seventeen, Prince Rupert with his elder brother, Charles Louis, first visited England. It is impossible to imagine anything likely to impress the young prince more than the Court of his uncle, Charles I. Every generation since that time has seen that king through the eyes of Van Dyck, an image noble, elegant, self-assured but remote, the visual expression of the monarch's own ideas of Divine Right. His courtiers, as the King, were depicted in a manner entirely new to England and appear equally self-assured, superbly attired, often with a touch of contemptuous arrogance. The artist's ideas were entirely in accord with the King's and he was treated with deference even by the greatest of the nobility and indeed embodied and directed the artistic aspirations of the Court. Rupert cannot fail to have come to know him and had in fact been painted by him some years before. Van Dyck now executed the fine double portrait of the two young princes which today hangs in the Louvre. Charles I's taste was remarkably discriminating and he had gathered round him a small but enlightened circle of artists, architects, poets, scholars and collectors, a society of a brilliance never again approached in England and unmatched in Europe at this period. Rupert would have met Inigo Jones, the King's surveyor, architect of the Queen's House, Greenwich, and the Banqueting House, Whitehall, an outstanding artist in his own right, and creator, with Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's younger rival, of the Court masques, a form of drama sumptuous and fantastic but ephemeral and entirely characteristic of that society whose foundations were already being undermined and which was soon to be swept away by the Civil War. Rupert must certainly have known Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, the friend of Rubens and Van Dyck, who combined a passion for the antique and collecting. But most of all he must have been impressed by the splendour of the royal collection itself which included masterpieces by Raphael, Titian, Rubens, Correggio, Mantegna, and Caravaggio. He would also have seen the ceiling paintings by Rubens, newly installed in the Banqueting House at Whitehall.

Clearly Rupert made his own impression at Court for Sir Thomas Roe wrote to his mother, Elizabeth of Bohemia, that he found him "full of spirit and action, full of observation and judgment . . . whatever he wills he wills vehemently" and again "whatever he undertakes he doth it vigorously and seriously. His nature is active and spritful and may be compared to steel, which is the commanding metal if it be rightly tempered and disposed." That nature found its physical outlet during his stay in England in hunting and we know that he left reluctantly with the intention of returning again.

Rupert's experiences in England no doubt stimulated his own efforts as an artist since his earliest etchings date from this time, but his education in the fine arts had been enlightened in spite of the enforced austerity in which his family lived in Holland. His father, Frederick V of Bohemia, the Winter King, after his defeat by the Imperial Catholic forces in 1620, went into exile when Prince Rupert was a year old, at the Hague. Here Rupert was educated as an upper class Dutch boy, matriculating at the University of Leyden in 1628, where he would have attended the lectures of Franciscus van Schooten, professor of mathematics and military architecture, who was also an amateur draughtsman. Rupert's own interests clearly lay in the same direction. By now he had learnt the rudiments of drawing and it seems certain that his master was Gerard van Honthorst, the celebrated Utrecht master and follower of Caravaggio, also employed by Charles I of England, who lived for a time with the exiled family and certainly gave lessons to Rupert's gifted sister Louisa and to their mother. Elizabeth, the former Queen of Bohemia, shared the refined and discriminating tastes of her brother Charles I and achieved a courtly ascendancy over the Cavalier mind which Sir Henry Wootton's lines express so well:

So when my Mistress shall be seen  
In sweetness of her looks and mind,  
By virtue first, then choice, a Queen,  
Tell me, if she were not design'd  
Th'eclipse and glory of her kind?

It is not surprising that Rupert should have executed his most famous mezzotint, known as *The Great Executioner* (fig. 2), after *The Executioner with the head of John the Baptist* (fig. 1) by a follower of Ribera, a painting which in its dramatic effects of *chiaroscuro* would have had a special appeal for a pupil of Honthorst and admirers of Caravaggio.

Rupert's visit to England was followed by his first major campaigns and the futile attempt to win back the Palatinate, which his father, the Elector, had lost along with the crown of Bohemia. The young prince was taken prisoner at Vlotho and languished in the Danube fortress of Linz for three years. That he was enchanted with the charms of his jailer's daughter is naturally better known than the fact that he spent some of this wearisome time practising drawing and engraving. There is an etching by him of a galloping horseman with an inscription in contemporary German that the print was made during Rupert's captivity.

The outbreak of the English Civil War, more bitter than the struggle that led to his imprisonment, caused his return in 1642, this time a mature leader. The changes he



found must have impressed him forcibly. Hollar, the Czech artist, who also knew England before the war, remarked later that the people of all classes used to look cheerful but that he found them much changed on his return, appearing "melancholy and spiteful as if bewitched." Rupert was made general of the King's horse and now his soldiering life seriously began. But he still found time to keep up at least some of his contacts with artists. William Faithorne, one of the outstanding earlier English engravers, became "painter to Prince Rupert" which can imply that the prince became his patron. This same artist engraved a portrait of him painted by William Dobson at about this time, a youthful and handsome face but, equally, sombre and determined. Rupert was caught up fully in the currents of the civil struggle and experienced to an unusual degree first the exhilaration, then the bitterness that it engendered. Finally he was ejected by these same forces and left the country in June 1645.

It was while he was exiled from England that Rupert first learnt of the new process of engraving, now acknowledged to have been invented by the German soldier and amateur artist, Ludwig von Siegen. Perhaps the prince made von Siegen's acquaintance, or at least learnt about his invention, at Cassel where in 1657 he visited his cousin William VI of Hesse-Cassel, for von Siegen was a colonel in William's service. We know that from this period Rupert



Fig. 1. "The Executioner with the head of John the Baptist" by a follower of Ribera.

was experimenting with tools to improve the new process. His first mezzotint plate is dated 1657 and he may have revealed the process soon after to the Dutchman, Wallerant Vaillant, one of the most famous of all early mezzotinters. There seems to have been a close working connection between the two men and it is thought that Rupert brought Vaillant back with him to England at the Restoration. The portrait in mezzotint of the prince by Vaillant reproduced here (fig. 3) probably dates from the time they first met. There is no doubt that Rupert pioneered the new method in England where it developed into an almost

Fig. 3. Mezzotint portrait of Prince Rupert by Wallerant Vaillant.



Fig. 2. "The Great Executioner," the most famous mezzotint by Prince Rupert.

exclusively English medium, becoming known as *la manière anglaise*.

Before describing Rupert's contribution to the development of mezzotint engraving, it will perhaps be useful to explain the process briefly. The line engraver, working on his copper plate, engraves his composition in lines with the burin. These hold the ink and under pressure print black. In mezzotint, the process is reversed for the whole plate is roughened with an instrument called the rocker in such a way that it retains the ink and prints a velvety black. The artist then begins to work on this ground re-

moving the rough burr with a scraper to obtain the lighter parts of his composition, the highlights corresponding to areas that have been completely scraped away and burnished so that no ink is held there at all. Thus the mezzotinter's compositions are in tone rather than line and he can perfectly reproduce paintings in *chiaroscuro*.

The mystery about the invention of the process arose from the diarist, John Evelyn's various conflicting statements. In his *Sculptura*, which appeared in 1662, he speaks of Rupert as the inventor of mezzotint who divulged the process to him: "his *Highness* did indulge me the liberty





Fig. 4. "The Standard Bearer," mezzotint by Prince Rupert after Pietro della Vecchia. The picture is lost.

of publishing the whole manner and address of this new way of *engraving*, with a freedom perfectly generous and obliging." After consideration, Evelyn decided not to let the secret out but preferred to "leave it thus enigmatical." He adds, however, that he intended to deposit a memorandum on the subject with the Royal Society. There are even earlier references by Evelyn in his diary to being

shown the process by Rupert, in February and March 1661. Yet in 1697 in his *Numismata* Evelyn names Ludwig von Siegen as the inventor without mention of Rupert. So Evelyn was the first writer to suggest either man's name as the inventor. That he named both in turn obscured the issue and resulted in various dishonourable and unjust motives being imputed to him, the most obvious being



that he wished to flatter a prince who was also a power at Court and, when the ruling dynasty had disappeared, told the truth. Thus the long debate began which has only very recently been closed by the publication of a document in the journal of the Walpole Society by Miss Orovida C. Pissarro. This document, discovered not many years ago in the Evelyn archives, incorporates what seems to be a draft or copy of the memorandum which the diarist intended for the Royal Society. It is clear from this that Prince Rupert showed Evelyn the new process in 1661 (as stated in the diary), telling him that "it was the devise of a common souldier in Germany." (Rupert can hardly be thought to have used the word "common" as he was clearly referring to von Siegen who was an aristocrat and a colonel.) It is also clear from letters which Rupert wrote to his cousin William VI of Hesse-Cassel in 1657 and 1658 that the tools he had been experimenting with were the forerunners of the "hatcher" described in detail in the document, which later became known as the rocker. Miss Pissarro, herself an experienced artist and etcher, has no hesitation in seeing in this development a revolutionary advance on the roulette which von Siegen used to roughen his plate. The results he obtained, as Evelyn said, were "not comparable to the Mezzo-Tinto of Prince Rupert." A glance at fig. 6, the portrait of Amelia, Landgravine of Hesse-Cassel, by von Siegen and the two famous plates in mezzotint by Rupert *The Great Executioner* and *The Standard-bearer* after Pietro della Vecchia (figs. 2 and 4) shows how right Evelyn was. Rupert was concerned more with tones, working from black to white, von Siegen more with line, since the degree of tone achieved by Rupert simply was not possible with the roulette. Both these



Fig. 6. Portrait of Amelia, Landgravine of Hesse-Cassel, mezzotint by Ludwig von Siegen.

prints by Rupert were made in 1658, about the time he first met Vaillant. It has even been suggested that these fine examples of mezzotint show too professional a talent for an amateur and that Vaillant must have had a hand in them. This can be discounted by considering a comparable plate by Vaillant, for example his version of *The Standard-bearer* (fig. 5), which has a smooth proficiency entirely uncharacteristic of Rupert and of which he would have been incapable.

There is plenty of evidence for Rupert's career on his return to England after the Restoration but very little about his own efforts as an artist and patron. A few mezzotints are dated between 1661 and 1664. One of the head of the executioner, from the painting which he had already engraved in mezzotint in 1658, forms the frontispiece to Evelyn's account of engraving, the *Sculptura*, published in 1662. Among Rupert's few known drawings is a pen sketch of a mortar mounted on a boat (fig. 8). It is not dated but may have been made during the period when Rupert was constable and governor of Windsor Castle after 1668. In his laboratory there he made experiments for the improvement of guns, firearms, and ammunition, though the mortar in the drawing is an old-fashioned piece of a type used in England since Elizabethan times. "Il avoit" the Marquis of Grammont noted, "le génie fécond en expériences de mathématiques et quelques talens pour la chimie." He was a founder member of the Royal Society



Fig. 5. Wallerant Vaillant's mezzotint version of "The Standard Bearer."



CHRISTINA REGINA SVEC

Fig. 7. Queen Christina of Sweden, an etching believed to be by Prince Rupert, which is almost a caricature.

and had a scientific interest in the techniques employed by artists, whether engravers, landscape draughtsmen or sculptors. From the French traveller, Balthasar de Monconys, who was in London in 1665, we hear of a gadget which Rupert showed him for drawing buildings in perspective. There is also mention elsewhere of an obscure French artist, Rolland Le Fevre, employed by Rupert "to stain marble" and of a curious painting on marble by Rupert himself of *The Woman taken in adultery*. He was painted by the most famous portraitists of the time, including Kneller and Michael Wright, but most impressively in Garter robes by Sir Peter Lely in the portrait belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company (reproduced on the cover of the Autumn number of *The Beaver* for 1959). From this Bloteling made an engraving which was used by the potter John Dwight to produce the fine bust of Rupert now in the British Museum (p. 4).

Sitting for portraits was after all exactly what other persons of royal and noble blood did but to discover something of Rupert's taste we have to turn to Evelyn's description of the prince's apartments at Windsor. Under 28th August-23rd September, 1670, he records that the prince had "handsomely adorn'd his hall, with a furniture of Armes, which was very singular; by so disposing the Pikes, Muskets, Pistols, Bandilers, Drumms, Back, brest & head pieces as was very extraordinary: & thus those huge steepe stayres ascending to it, had the Walls invested with this martial furniture, all new & bright, & set with such study,

Fig. 8. One of Rupert's few known drawings, a pen sketch of a mortar mounted on a boat.

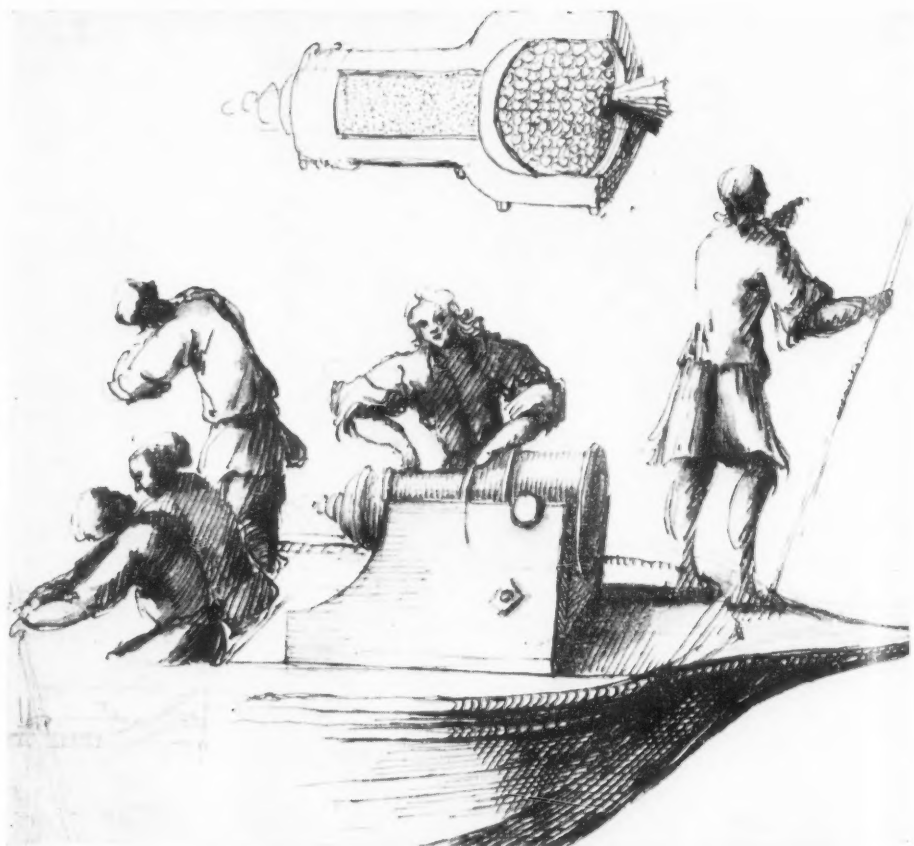


Fig. 1 is reproduced by courtesy of Bayerischen Staatsgemaltesammlungen, Munich; all other illustrations by permission of the British Museum.





Fig. 9. This etching by Prince Rupert, "Horses and cart in a landscape" bears his monogram.

as to represent, Pillasters, Cornishes, Architraves, Freezes, by so disposing the bandalliers, holsters, & Drums, so as to represent festoones, & that with out any Confusion, Trophy like: from the Hall, we went into his *Bedchamber* & ample roomes which were hung with tapissrie, curious [*i.e.*, skilfully painted] & effeminate Pictures, so extreamely different from the other, which presented nothing but Warr & horror, as was very surprizing & Divertissant."

After Rupert's death in 1683 his collection of pictures passed to his natural daughter, Ruperta. These were not named individually in his will but Vertue lists the pictures which Ruperta possessed when she died and which were sold in 1741. Many of them would have belonged to her father such as the family portraits of King James I by Van Somer, Frederick V and Elizabeth of Bohemia by Honthorst, the miniature of Prince Henry (probably Elizabeth's brother), Charles I's Queen, Henrietta Maria, by Van Dyck, and Prince Rupert (artist not named). There were also portraits of John Carleton, Lord Maynard, "a black holding a glass," the Earl of Craven (the loyal and devoted friend of Elizabeth of Bohemia and whose name appears in the charter of incorporation of the Hudson's

Bay Company) and the Countess of Sussex. Then is noted the painting on marble by Rupert, already mentioned, and "four figures" by Honthorst.

The drawings and prints by Rupert which have survived admittedly make up a very modest total: probably less than twenty mezzotints, several of them after Titian, and a number signed with the monogram *RP* or *Rpf* (*Rupertus princeps fecit*) surmounted by a crown; still fewer drawings, three of them in the British Museum and several among the Evelyn papers; and about a dozen etchings. They are enough to show that Rupert was an amateur of talent and the best of his mezzotints are among the finest ever produced. His rapid sketches, as we should expect from his character, are lively and expressive of his practical mind even if they are much influenced by great masters like Callot. Most of his etchings again show ability and charm (see fig. 9). The etched portrait of Queen Christina of Sweden (fig. 7), if it is Rupert's, stands on its own and, though clumsy, is cruelly effective, almost a caricature. These achievements are enough to give him a high place as an amateur artist while his development of mezzotint engraving is a positive contribution to the history of art.



IN the early thirties, a northern bush pilot stayed aloft on a sky-hook of 'Caution'. The chances we took were calculated risks. An emergency had to have an emotional wallop before we flew when we had no business being in the air. That's the way it was when I was based at Cameron Bay, on the east side of Great Bear Lake and the schooner *Speed II* failed to arrive on her last trip of the season.

The magnet which had drawn most of us to the far north was the discovery of radium and silver. My territory was the Arctic. Rivers were my highways and lakes my landing fields. I was pilot and mechanic of a single motor Curtiss Robin, painted bright red for visibility against snow or evergreens. I owned that small aircraft and gave it the care a mother bestows on a delicate child.

When a bush pilot forgot the ticklish balance between his equipment and the hazards of the north, his log book usually closed with a violent snap. Gasoline, for instance, had to be calculated and cached a year in advance. My plane had a thirst for ten gallons an hour, which allowed me seven hours in the air. A bush pilot was a miser when it came to using that precious time.

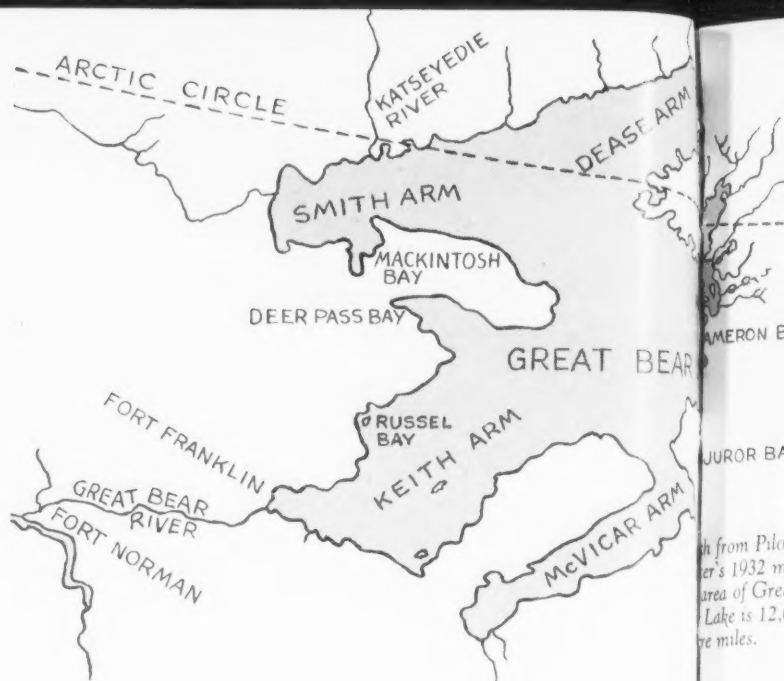
If bad weather closed in, we just sat down and waited for it to clear. All flying stopped for a month or six weeks in the spring when ice was breaking up and in the fall until it thickened sufficiently to hold the weight of an aircraft.

It was the in-between season of October 1933. I had changed over from floats to skis, tuned up my engine and bedded down the Curtiss Robin for the long wait till Great Bear Lake made ice. Cameron Bay was a lonely huddle of cabins. Our last link with the outside world until late November would be the arrival of the schooner *Speed II*.

She was a gas-powered open boat, which hauled a freight barge from Fort Franklin on the west side across one hundred and ninety-five miles to Cameron Bay, just south of Port Radium. It took her a day, sometimes a day and a half if weather was bad. We expected her about the twenty-fifth of the month. She didn't arrive.

Our anxiety was increased by an arctic gale. The temperature dropped to twenty-four below zero. Sheltered by hills, Cameron Bay froze over. But the big lake stayed open—lashed into a wild dark sea, which sent up clouds of vapour to return as sleet. A boat would have small hope of survival on that fierce turbulence.

Murphy Services owned the *Speed*. Their only representative in our small settlement was a young, eager fellow called Ernie Mills. Now, responsibility, heavy as a loaded pack, sat on his shoulders. A radio message to the south (if one could get through) wouldn't help much. We were isolated by the in-between season of freeze-up.



# ELEVEN

*Harry Hayter and Jack Moar are in the ranks of the pioneer bush pilots*

Even if we could find enough men for a ground party, a search of the twisted shoreline of the lake would take months. Great Bear is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world. We kept hoping for a few days that the *Speed* would get in, but she didn't.

Vic Ingraham was her captain. He was a man built for the north, tough and strong. A big man in every way—intelligence, imagination, and heart. Ernie and I would tell each other: "Vic will beat anything the Arctic can throw at him." Then we'd think of Vic's crew. Although he ruled the men with iron discipline, a lot were green hands. One was a nineteen year old boy from the prairies. Some of them still got seasick.

At last the fury of the gale subsided to angry snarls. "He'll come today," we said. But he didn't. We stopped kidding ourselves. The *Speed* was in trouble—serious trouble.

I knew that the only hope of a rescue lay in an air search. Caution weighed heavy. I disliked the idea of flying over open water with a single motor aircraft on skis. Floats were out of the question, they'd take on a load of ice which would swamp me. Aircraft engines weren't too reliable in those days, and if a cylinder let go, that was the end.



The schooner "Speed II" is launched.

# ENDAYS OVER DEATH

BY HARRY HAYTER

as told to Kitty and Jack Moar

On the other hand Vic was a close friend; his wife and mine were friends and they had two of the cutest children you ever saw. In fact, most of the men on the boat and barge were friends—when a handful of people are thrown together in the vast Arctic, they become comrades mighty fast.

When I tested the ice of the bay on the 28th of October, it seemed thick enough for a take-off. I was working on the aircraft when Ernie came down to help me.

"You're going up to try her out?" asked Ernie.

I nodded. "Tomorrow I'll take off to look for Vic."

"You'll need another pair of eyes, Harry," said Ernie, "I'll go with you."

Yes, and I'll need a little support for my morale too, I thought. I knew I couldn't find a better man than Ernie. He was resourceful and good company. Ernie had a proud heritage in the north. His father captained H B C steamers on the Mackenzie River and an uncle was the distinguished Charles Camsell, geologist and explorer.

It was twenty-five below zero at six o'clock next morning, the 29th of October. I remember the date very well, it was my thirty-third birthday. Warming an aircraft for winter flight was a long tedious business. Frost and ice must be carefully cleaned from all surfaces. While oil

heated in a five gallon can, plumbers' firepots were lit and set on the snow under a tent-like canopy which covered the motor. A constant alert must be kept against the threat of a flash fire. Emergency supplies had to be checked: tool kit, snowshoes, sleeping bags, gun, fishing lines, axe, food rations, first aid box.

We took off at 10 a.m. It was just getting light.

Since prevailing winds were from the northwest we decided to search the south shore first. My maps of 1933 showed only a few inches of its lacework of bays and islands in an accurate survey. We headed into Conjuror Bay. We cursed the heavy overcast. Flying low so that we could see a boat, our light plane was tossed like a cork on an ocean wave. To add to our misery, the heater wasn't working and our breath froze solid on the windows. We had to fly with them open. Although we were dressed warmly in layers of woollen underwear, heavy trousers, caribou parkas, duffel socks and mukluks, it didn't take long for the damp and cold to penetrate right into the marrow of our bones.

The marvel was that the small motor of the Curtiss Robin could drone on with the monotony of its distinctive beat. Conversation was too much effort with the added noise of the hollow roar of air rushing by and in the win-





Murphy Services owned "Speed II". Hayter is at left, Ingraham third from left.

dows. I turned around to see if the motion was making Ernie airsick. There he sat, looking down first from one side, then the other. He caught my eye and stopped his teeth from chattering long enough to give me a cold, stiff grin.

Below us, the wilderness of shoreline was a jumble of giant rocks and boulders. In crevices, snow sought refuge along with dwarfed spruce. Cliffs pulled up to over a thousand feet, while breakers thrashed at their feet. White-coated islands floated in a dark ocean like icebergs. The whole scene over the water reminded me of the days when I flew over the north Atlantic, spotting seals for a commercial fleet.

We searched Point Leith and around Bear Island. When half the gasoline was used, we turned to cover parts we might have missed, on our way back to base. There was no boat, no barge.

The search next day was a brief one. Moisture began to freeze on the wings and it doesn't take much to destroy the precise contour needed to maintain flight. I spent the day working on the aircraft.

The sun peeped through on Hallowe'en morning and our spirits rose with it. This would be a good day, we knew it. My wife had packed us a scalding vacuum of coffee and a crock of beans wrapped hot in an old quilt.

The heater worked and the air was smooth. I wasn't surprised when Ernie pounded on my back and pointed down to smoke rising from an island. It was our lucky day, there was even a frozen bay to land on. I got down and pulled up before reaching open water. But the canoes on shore were not from the *Speed*. They belonged to a party of prospectors who had been close enough to the island to take shelter when the gale had hit. They had tents and some food. We gave them the beans and part of our rations and promised to return for them after our search. It was a temptation to pile a couple of them in the cabin, but the ice was so thin we dared not put more weight on it.

We flew all day, hoping to find a white boat or a box-like barge and fearing to find wreckage.

When I got home that night, Florence Ingraham and the children were there. I tried to get into the spirit of a Hallowe'en party for the youngsters, but had to break the news that to save gas and time we'd be basing across the lake at Franklin. Two anxious faces looked back at me: one said "find my husband," the other "don't lose mine."

For four days now, I'd been tempting fate by flying when the odds were heavy against me. On the trip to Franklin, Fate cut me down to size—just a small guy in a small plane. A weather front came in from the north like a black curtain. It started to snow. Snow mixed with fog—a



dangerous combination. It forced me to fly at about fifty feet. The waves that reached up for my skis sneered that I'd been foolish enough to get caught like that.

It closed in behind me. I had to keep going. Just east of Keith Arm, Grizzly Bear Mountain rises to a height of 1,500 feet. I retreated to the south to find a lake where I could sit down and wait out the weather. Ernie and I pressed our noses to the windows; it seemed an eternity before we spotted a pan of white in the wilderness of rocks. We landed and taxied to the shelter of the north shore. We stayed in the cabin of the aircraft until we got thoroughly chilled; then stamped into the scrub to gather wood, splash it with gasoline and get a fire going. Time stood still while we hunched over the small flame and watched streaks of snow polish ice and pile in drifts on the far side of the lake. At last Ernie suggested he fix the engine cover as a tent and get out the sleeping bags.

"Let's take a crack at going on," I suggested.

We took off and climbed to 12,000 feet over the storm. My instrument panel was hopelessly inadequate for blind

There was a lot of reassurance in the sound and feel of an aircraft I tended myself.

At last I turned around to Ernie and pointed to a hole in the overcast. "There's Franklin," I shouted. We went down and sure enough it was. Ernie was very impressed.

My triumph was short lived. A thin cover of snow concealed glare ice. When I touched down my skis, a gust of wind hit us and we went into the bay in a series of giddy circles. When we stopped Ernie let out a shuddering sigh.

"What're you beefing about, Ernie?" I asked, "we didn't buckle a pedestal or sheer off a wing tip."

"I wasn't beefing," said Ernie, "I was just aging."

We searched out of Franklin, feeling lower every day. We looked for wreckage and men stranded on the shore. About the only bright spot to lighten our discouragement was our host, Sammy Campbell. He treated the north with scornful respect. He'd come into that country on foot, overland from the Yukon. He lived from the land mostly, and joked about not having enough food for a decent meal. Ernie offered to go out after ptarmigan.



*Ernie Mills (right) by the Curtiss Robin aeroplane used in the search.*

flying. I had a bank and turn indicator, an altimeter, an airspeed indicator which didn't like cold weather, and a compass which told lies in the vicinity of Grizzly Bear Mountain. My biggest asset was the habit developed by all bush pilots of memorizing unmapped terrain and the unconsciously developed sense of direction we all had.

"The Injuns got this whole place hunted out," then Sammy roared with laughter, "except for my own private game sanctuary—the cemetery. The Injuns are too superstitious to hunt there."

We were too hungry to be superstitious and got about five birds to fry up.

"How'd you like ice cream for dessert?" asked Sammy. We laughed at his joke, but Sammy went outside and came back with a bucket of snow. He dumped a bottle of lemon extract over it and dished it out. It tasted good too.

On the seventh day of our search we used the last of the gasoline at Franklin and had to go across to Fort Norman to ferry some back. Next morning I nearly lost the Curtiss Robin. I was warming it and was under the engine cover, trying the prop. I didn't see the canvas blowing in to reach the open flame of a firepot. I was able to beat the fire out all right, but seared my hands a bit. Ernie bandaged them up, but it was awkward working for awhile.

Our next scare was in Mackintosh Bay. Forced down with a rough motor, I was walking around to the engine when Ernie yelled that the ice was giving way. We both made it to the shore in nothing flat and turned, expecting to see the aircraft sink into the lake. But she stayed up and we took off. I don't know what kept us airborne on that return trip unless it was sheer will power.

Going over the machine, next day, I noticed that the skis were all chewed up from their many landings on rough ice. We had to return to Cameron Bay for repairs.

Sergeant Baker of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police made me a new pair from sleigh board runners. He did a wonderful job, but he was a perfectionist. Skis should be brown. There was no stain in Cameron Bay, so he settled for a bottle of iodine.

We were glad to take to the air again. A pall of gloom had fallen over the settlement. My supply of gasoline was dwindling fast, I couldn't search much longer.

On the eleventh day we found them.

At first we thought the barge was a flat rock, then saw tracks leading to a camp. They were on the north shore at the mouth of the Katseyedie River. We had to go two miles inland to make a landing on a frozen muskeg lake. The walk back from the lake was as bad as anything we'd gone through. We'd stay up for one step, the next we'd plunge down about two feet into the swamp.

Two men from the crew came to meet us—Stu Currie and George Matthews. Our questions tumbled out, but their answers were slower.

"Vic's alive, but that's about all," said Stu. "He froze his feet and hands on top of the burns. He's delirious most of the time. . . ."

"How did he get burnt?"

"Trying to save Harry Jebbs and Jimmy Potts. Say, did Stan Hooker and Bill Parker tell you we were here? They left over a week ago to try to walk to Cameron Bay."

They hadn't arrived when we took off that morning. Their trip would be a hundred miles of rugged shoreline.



*Harry Hayter with the 'plane he owned and operated.*

It took a lot of questions to fill in the story of the *Speed's* ordeal. Shortly after she left Franklin, she was hit by a southeasterly gale. Wind velocity was estimated at over fifty miles an hour. For two days they fought its furious assault. The boat and barge would be plunged together into near collision in the trough of the waves, then the seas would snap them apart with a strain that threatened to tear the ends from both vessels. At last Captain Vic Ingraham was forced to give the order to cut the barge adrift.

George Matthews and six other men were on the barge. It was saved from being pounded to pieces by the cargo in its hold. Lengths of pig iron turned into supporting beams when bilge water froze into ice.

"We drifted here, to the north shore," said George. "I guess we weren't meant for a watery grave, because that barge held together until we were on the rocks then the whole end fell out. We jumped in the water and waded ashore. We got a fire going and thawed out a bit."

Stu told of the *Speed*. They battled the gale for two more days after the barge was cut loose. It seemed as if they made no progress at all, but they must have gone about twenty miles. There were no cabins on the boat, not even a galley. Stu and Vic were on deck when they heard screams from below. Vic rushed down. A spark had



*The Ingraham children, whose father was missing.*



*Vic Ingraham, before the accident.*

ignited gasoline spilt on the bilge. Jebbs was unconscious in the engine room. Vic dragged him out. Seasick, Potts had crawled into a forward hold. Vic was forced back from saving him by the fast spreading flames. Jebbs, the engineer, must have been in a bad state of shock, because he had crawled back into the engine room and perished there.

Vic climbed up and yelled for Stu to launch their half-inflated rubber lifeboat. The fumes below had blinded Vic and his feet and hands were badly burnt.

"We'd just got clear of the *Speed* when she exploded and sank," said Stu. They floated all night in that rubber doughnut with waves breaking over them. When they reached shore, they were almost beaten by the climb up ice-covered rocks.

"I think I'd have given up right there," said Stu, "here was Vic with holes burnt in his mitts and moccasins, still blind and on top of everything his feet and hands had frozen. We had no shelter and no food. But Vic said we had to walk back to the west to find the fellows on the barge. It was our only hope."

With Stu guiding, the two men walked and stumbled and crawled eighteen miles back to the barge. It took them forty-eight hours.

When I saw Vic, he was lying on spruce boughs in a tent they made from a tarpaulin. His face was swollen and

flushed with fever. The air reeked with the smell of gangrene. I pressed a flask of rum to his lips, he pushed it away and said to give it to his men.

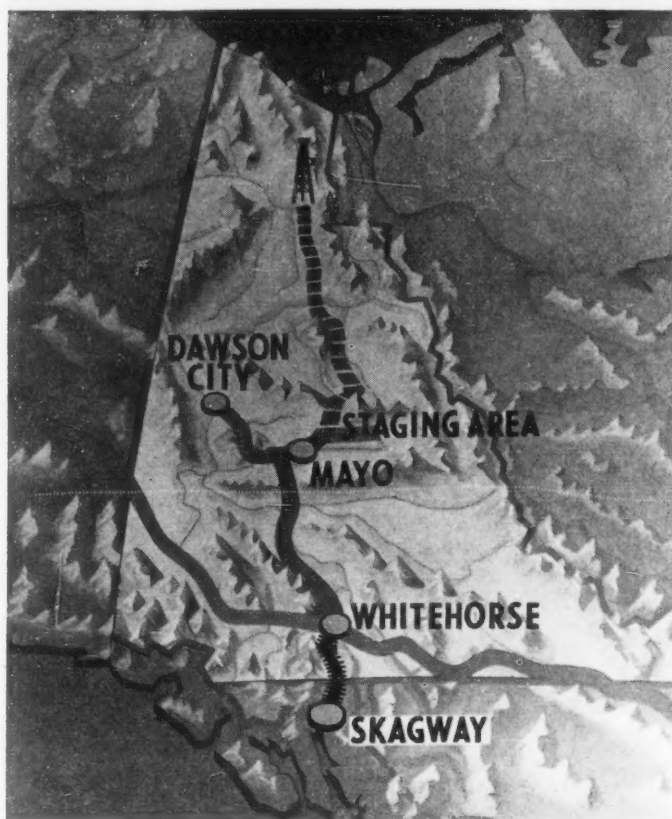
We improvised a stretcher and carried him those two awful miles back to the plane. It was dark when I took off, but I said a little prayer and headed for home straight across the lake. The whole settlement was there to meet us. Even Stan and Bill, who had arrived about noon, after their long walk.

Vic recovered from his ordeal, but it took many long months and twenty-seven operations. He lost most of his fingers and his legs were amputated well above the knees. He returned to the north and made a considerable fortune before retiring to live at the west coast. He was a man the Arctic couldn't beat.

My part in the rescue ended when a silent procession followed Vic's stretcher up the hill. I turned to look at my machine, resting on a pair of homemade skis. I put my hand on the red fabric of a wing which held just a slosh of gas. I saluted a small motor which had kept us airborne for eleven days. Stars were coming out in a black sky.

"Thank you," I said, "I guess I can take over now." ♦





# WIND RIVER TRAIL

PICTURE STORY

BY H. W. ROOZEBOOM

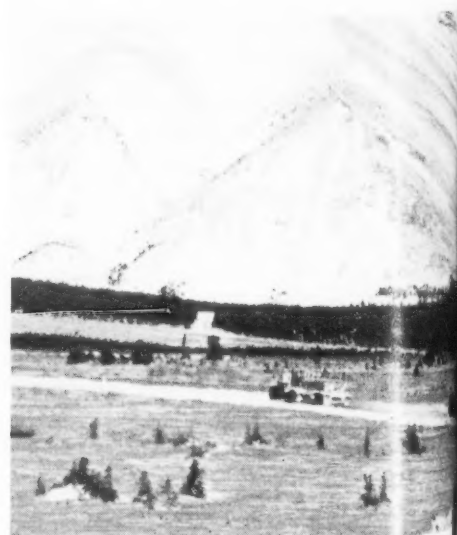
**N**OT an Indian trail, not an animal trail—this is the trail of white man searching for oil in the far places. Last year it was decided to explore in the Bell River basin of the northern Yukon, some hundred miles from the shore of the Arctic sea. The first and biggest problem that arose was how to move thousands of tons of oil search equipment into the wilderness more than 1700 miles from Vancouver. The Yukon has few roads, none in the northern part of the territory, and the waterways that provided the earlier means of transportation are not helpful for a south-to-north route. Aircraft are hampered by lack of lakes for landings, apart from the high cost of flying in heavy machinery even if airstrips were laid out.

The answer seemed to be the creation of a winter road, built when swampy ground was frozen into solid support, and rivers could be crossed on ice. A road on which ordinary tractors with trailers could be used.

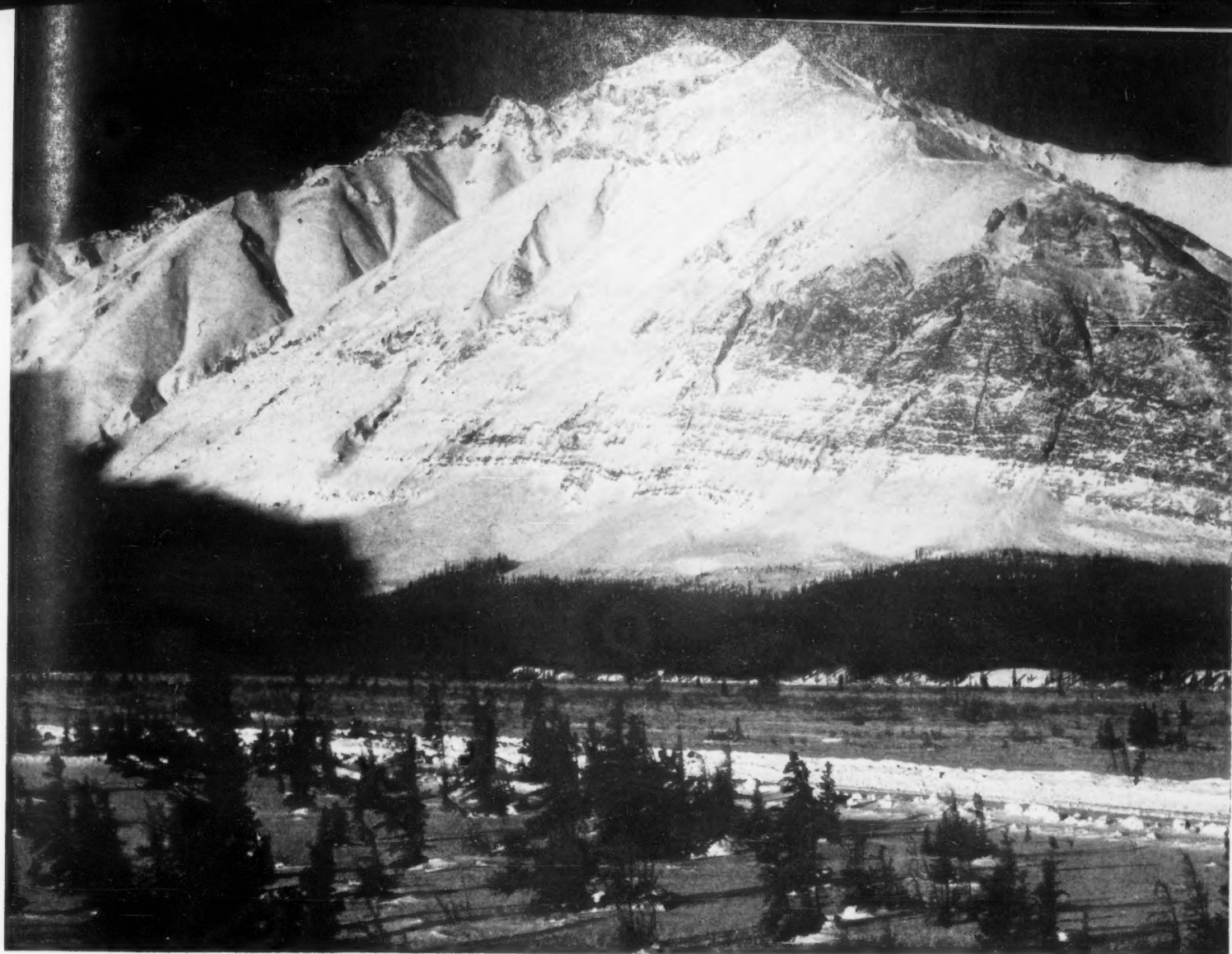
Except for the drilling rig, which started its travels from the oil-fields of Alberta along the Alaska Highway, the point of departure for freight was Vancouver. The first part of the journey was a routine operation, with transportation handled by the White Pass and Yukon Route; by steamer to Skagway, Alaska, thence by diesel train to Whitehorse in the Yukon, and northwards by motor transport to Mayo over 250 miles of all-weather gravel road that was constructed ten years ago.



*Trimming the trail near the Arctic Circle.*



*Convoy of Wind River valley*



*In the Werneck Mountains, near Braine Pass.*

The general route for the trail north from Mayo was picked out by aeroplane and helicopter and in early October work was begun on the ground. The first bulldozers plunged into the unknown to hack out a truck trail, overcoming obstacles on the way as best they might. They were followed by other 'dozers which trimmed the

trail, and graders which dressed the surface. The trail-blazers followed the McQuesten River to the Beaver River, where the first major crossing had to be made. A fill of snow and debris was bulldozed in from bank to bank and in a matter of hours the crossing was completed. The same method was used in subsequent river crossings. At

*Tightening the load on a trailer.*



*Convoy of Beaver River valley.*





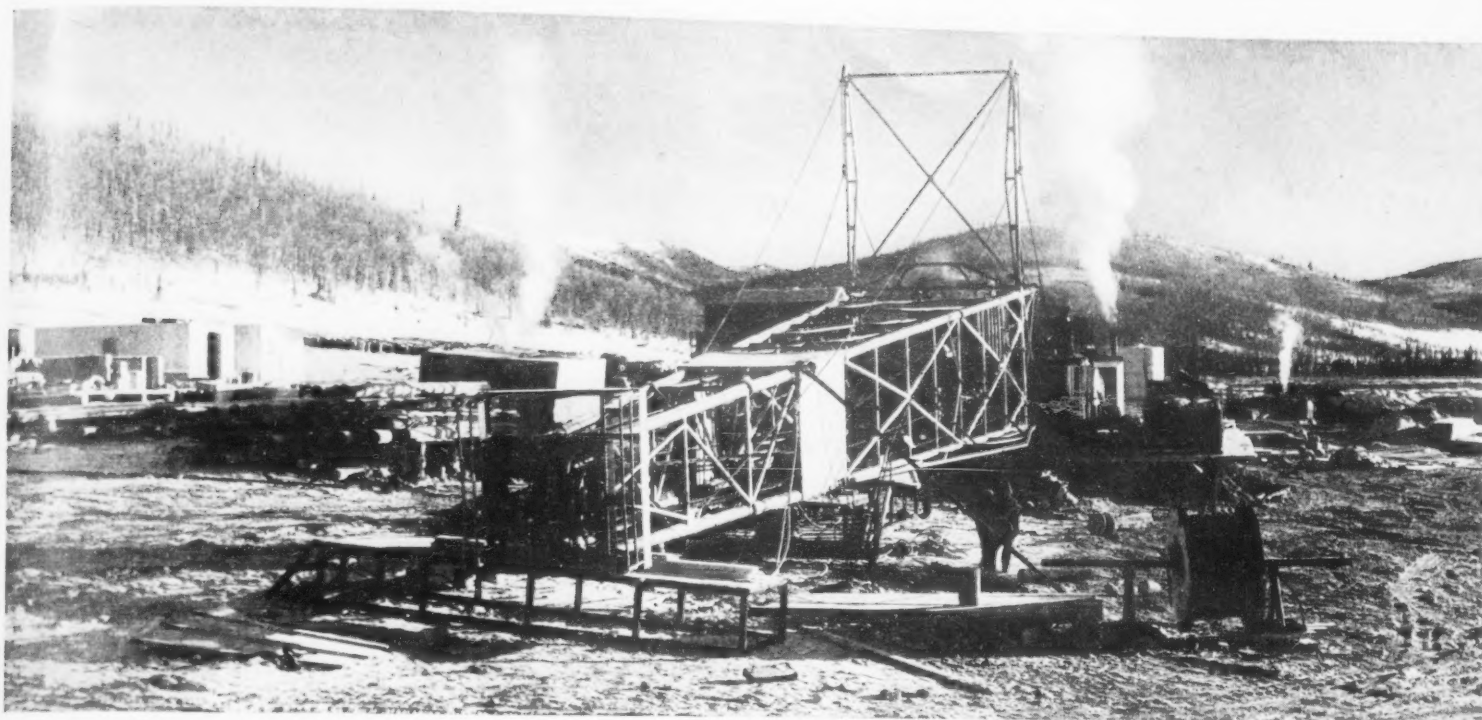
the Hart River a 200-foot ice bridge was constructed in two hours.

The Braine Pass, at a height of 4,500 feet, was crossed in a week, and the long valley of the Wind River stretched out before the road builders. Crossing the Little Wind River at its confluence with the Wind River they came to glaciers, layer upon freezing layer covering the whole valley with a gigantic fan of ice. Bulldozers ripped and tore, to make a smooth roadbed for the convoys that would follow. Ever northward they went, over the Peel, largest river to be crossed, leaving the Ogilvie and Wernecke Mountains, climbing the edge of the Peel Plateau to reach an endless sea of rolling hills. They churned on, averaging almost five miles a day, to the upper reaches of the Eagle River and so to the well site at the confluence of the Eagle and Bell Rivers. This was the place where in 1932 the so-called "mad trapper" Johnson shot out a duel with the R.C.M.P. and lost the last round.

There were so few hours of daylight that much of the work of the trail-blazers had to be done by the glare of headlights, and some of it at temperatures down to  $50^{\circ}$  below zero. The engines of the bulldozers were never stopped; they provided heat for the crew and, if they were shut off for even an hour they could not be started again. The work went on steadily and in less than three months the 381 miles of trail was completed and open for traffic.

Traffic took the form of heavily loaded tractor-trailers. These twenty-one trucks were divided into convoys of three or four, and their round trips took from five to six days. The average rate of the convoy was ten miles an hour, barring trouble on the trail. Stops were frequently necessary for tightening loads, which had a tendency to shift on the rough road. There were times when drifting snow caused delays, for the Wind River was aptly named, and one convoy was snowed in for 36 hours. Maintenance

ails from the south reach the well site.  
 of hill in background is at the  
 fluence of Bell and Eagle Rivers.

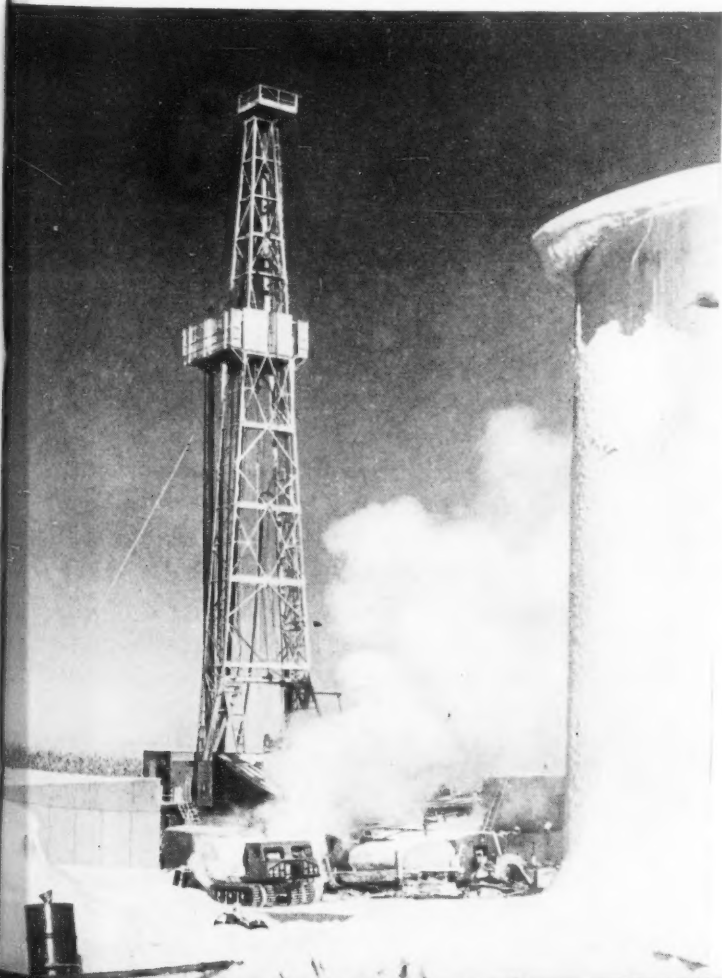


*The rig being raised to drill an exploratory hole to 12,000 feet or to bedrock.*

graders and bulldozers were located at strategically placed camps to clear snow and keep the road graded.

Cook-houses and bunk-houses were set up about every 125 miles along the trail. Here the drivers checked their loads and were provided with hot meals at any time of

*Well on the Peel Plateau about 200 miles south of the Bell River site.*



the day or night. Food, extra clothing, wooden matches, an axe, and other survival equipment were standard supplies with each truck. Man was not the only user of the trail he had made, for herds of caribou would run in front of the trucks at night, and wolves and even wolverine that chose to run on the packed snow of the road were run down and killed.

During the winter a few Indians from Old Crow and Fort McPherson came with dog teams to the Bell River valley in search of caribou. Great was their astonishment to see the camp with its cluster of buildings and its monstrous machinery. They were so fascinated by the machines that they could not tear themselves away to hunt, till they and their dogs were nearly starving, the teams being saved on one occasion by dog-food flown in from Fort McPherson.

The drill rig was raised and by the middle of March the last of the material was delivered. Then maintenance equipment was hauled out and drifting snow closed the trail. Those who remained depended on radio and aircraft for contact with the outside world. In the spring with the break-up of the rivers the ice bridges melted, the ground softened and the road was but a scar through the trees. But with another winter, trucks may rumble again along the Wind River Trail, twisting between lakes, over rivers, through mountain passes, across marshland, and winding ever north through bush, timbered slopes, stony barrens and frozen tundra. ♦





*Your most obedient humble servant*  
*George Simpson*

# The Little Emperor

BY JOHN S. GALBRAITH

*Dr. Galbraith is professor of British Empire history at the University of California and author of "The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-69"*

SIR George Simpson died on 7 September 1860, in the fullness of his glory, only a few days after he had taken a prominent part in the reception of the Prince of Wales amidst a setting which must have delighted his sense of the theatrical. On that festive day the Prince's barge, accompanied by nine garishly decorated canoes manned by painted and plumed Iroquois warriors, put in to the landing of Simpson's estate at Isle Dorval, three miles from Lachine. There for the next few hours, Simpson luxuriated in the sunshine of ultimate social attainment as he entertained His Royal Highness and other dignitaries. The *Montreal Gazette* described the scene:

"... About half-past four the party embarked in the canoes, and proceeded in great style and at a rapid pace, towards Lachine; one bearing the royal standard and carrying the Prince, the Duke of Newcastle, and General Williams, taking the lead, while the remainder in line abreast, followed close behind it. About the centre of the brigade we observed Sir George Simpson (accompanied by the Earl of Mulgrave and General Bruce, both fellow-voyageurs of Sir George) directing the movements in person."

This spectacle was an appropriate ending to an era. By 1860 the grip of the fur trade on the southern regions of the chartered territory was being subjected to the first thrusts of an adversary it could not vanquish and it had become clearly evident to the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, as to Simpson himself, that the traders and trappers in that sector must withdraw before the superior claims of colonization. But Sir George did not live to see the surrender.

Providence thus smiled on Simpson, for he began his governorship when the Company's fortunes were on the ascendant and he died before its monopoly was seriously threatened. His forty years with the Company were associated with almost constant prosperity, and he was recognized by contemporaries as well as by posterity as the great governor, the "Little Emperor of the Plains." Henry Moberly, by no means an unqualified admirer of the Company, nevertheless described Simpson as "without doubt ... the most capable governor the Hudson's Bay Company ever had." This illustrious reputation was a product of more than good luck. Simpson certainly contributed to the Company's prosperity, and his peculiar combination

of business virtues gave a distinctive cast to its operations.

The rise of George Simpson was in the Horatio Alger tradition of self-made success, though his career was advanced at critical moments by the intervention of a benign fate. Little is known of his early life. Sensitive about his illegitimate birth, he rejected all efforts to elicit information on his childhood, and jealously guarded his private life against intrusion. After repeated efforts to secure from Simpson an expanded statement, the editor of Dodd's *Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage* was forced to accept a "biography" stating the governor's name, position, and residence, with no reference to family, birth, or other customary details. Estimates of his date of birth vary from 1786 to 1795, though the most reliable evidence seems to indicate that it was in 1786 or 1787. About 1807 he left his native Scotland for London to begin work as a clerk in the firm of his uncle, Geddes McKenzie Simpson, the father of his future wife, and for the next twelve years worked as a sugar broker's clerk. This phase of his life is also obscure—there is some reason to believe that on at least one occasion he visited the West Indies on behalf of the firm—but clearly his competence as a young man of business soon attracted the favourable attention of his superiors, and, in particular, of Andrew Colvile, a partner in the sugar firm and also one of the most influential members of the Hudson's Bay Company's governing committee. It was to Colvile that Simpson owed his appointment in 1820 as a governor *locum tenens* of the Company.

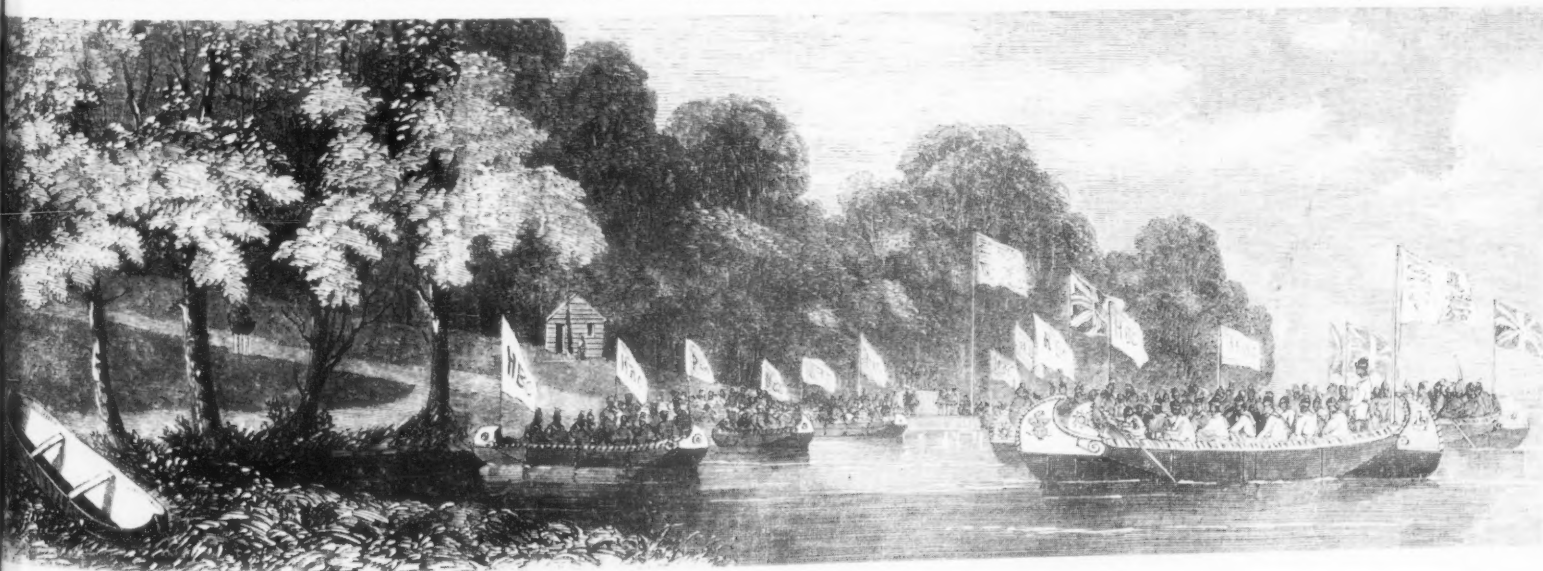
Early training in business methods, which reinforced an ingrained devotion to economy and efficiency, was a great asset in an administrator but when Simpson left England in March, 1820, his ability to manage men remained

unproved. His letters at this time are those of an offensively aggressive little man. He wrote that he had told some Americans on the ship of his "contempt for their weakness, vanity and arrogance and assured them that John Bull merely wanted the opportunity to chastise them for their presumption and insolence." Since he was on his way to do battle with the Nor'Westers in the Athabasca country, such language may be excused as mental preparation for the forthcoming struggle. During the Athabasca campaign, Simpson delivered himself of several other expressions of derring-do. But a new era was about to begin. The North West Company was on the verge of collapse and its officers and agents were suing for peace. Years of ruinous competition ended in 1821 with amalgamation—in reality, absorption.

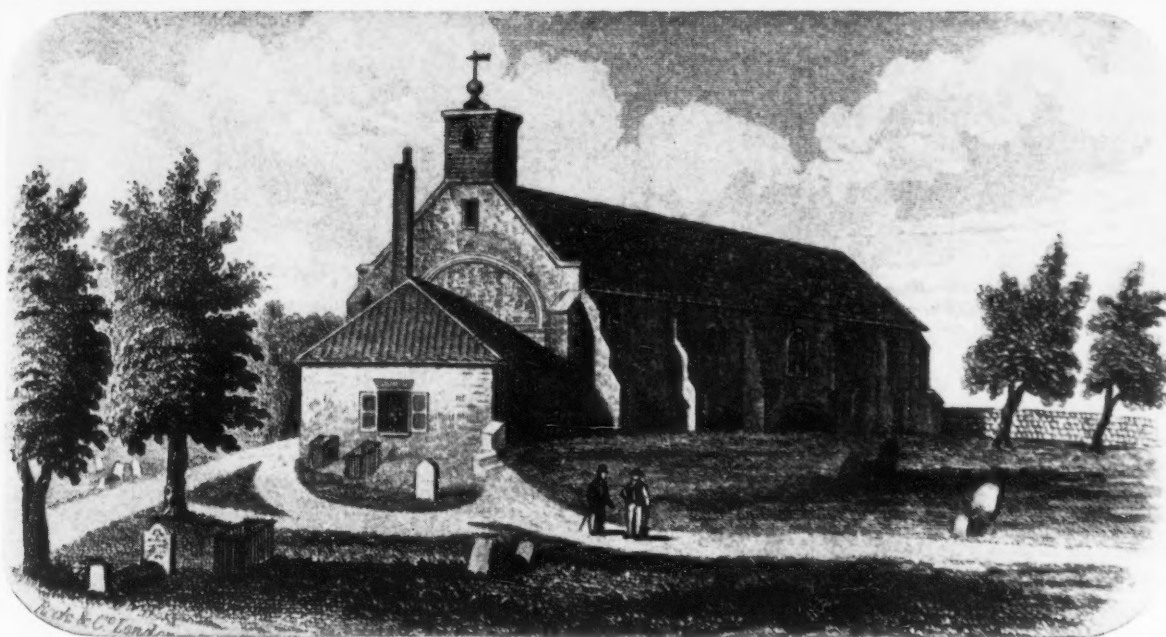
Simpson heard of the coalition on his way east from the Athabasca district. He recorded his disappointment "that instead of a junction our Opponents have not been beaten out of the Field, which with one or two years of good management I am certain might have been effected." Such sentiments could have been expressed in much the same language by Colin Robertson, William Williams, and other doughty warriors intent on the utter annihilation of their hated adversary. But the management of the augmented Hudson's Bay Company required a very different type of leader, a man who could combine tact with firmness, a virtuoso of the managerial art. These qualities Simpson now displayed magnificently. It was his feat to fit into an efficiently functioning machine men who had recently been embroiled in bitter conflict which not infrequently had involved bloodshed. Years of competition had accustomed the Indians to high prices and plentiful

The grand canoe reception given to the Prince of Wales by Simpson at Dorval in 1860.

Illustrated London News







St. Mary's, Bromley,  
St. Leonard,  
Middlesex, where  
Simpson was married  
in 1830. This church  
was razed in 1841.

liquor. Simpson restored the practices of monopoly to the rich fur preserves of Rupert's Land. It was perhaps the most impressive achievement of his career, the work of a man of extraordinary subtlety and resourcefulness.

The superficial blandness with which Simpson's personality was invested at first deceived some of his subordinates. In 1821 a North West Company employee wrote that Simpson was reputed to be a "gentlemanly man" who would "not create much alarm, nor do I presume him formidable as an Indian trader." Three years later, this man, now in the service of the great monopoly, bemoaned the end of the good old days of easy discipline. "The Northwest," he lamented, "is now beginning to be ruled with an iron rod."

The "iron" was rarely visible, for Simpson early perceived that the way to manage men was to lead rather than to coerce. He wrote to John George McTavish, on one occasion his substitute in presiding over the Southern Council, "Let me entreat that you keep temper and do not allow yourself [to] be drawn into altercation with any of those who may be there; you can gain neither honor nor glory by quarrelling with them but can twist them round your finger by setting about it properly." But, as the personnel of the fur trade quickly realized, beneath the smooth affability, there remained a hard ruthless nature.

Simpson dedicated his energies to the advancement of the trade and profits of the Company with which he completely identified himself. In pursuit of this objective he consulted with the Company's commissioned personnel and gave their views respectful hearing. But once he had decided upon a course, he was intolerant of criticism by underlings; those who opposed him did so at their peril. Employees believed, with good reason, that a common penalty for incurring his displeasure was transfer to the worst districts and loss of opportunities for promotion. Usually his ire was reserved for those with slovenly business habits or lack of regard for economy. John Stuart in 1838 advised his nephew Donald Smith—the future Lord

Strathcona—of the way to Simpson's favour. "No man is more appreciative of downright hard work coupled with intelligence. . . . It is his foible to exact not only strict obedience, but deference to the point of humility. As long as you pay him in that coin you will quickly get on his sunny side and find yourself in a few years a trader at a congenial post, with promotion in sight." As Stuart's injunction implied, Simpson's devotion to efficiency was combined with an overpowering drive for self-aggrandizement which grew in his mature years into a colossal vanity. The testimony of hostile observers like John McLean may be discounted, but even the friendly Stuart was forced to admit that while "unbiassed to follow the dictates of his good heart, there cannot be a more kind or better man, . . . he is alike easily influenced by the flattery and prejudice of others and when aroused, excitable and without much reflection and will go to any lengths."

Between 1821 and 1826, Simpson shared power with William Williams, then governor of the Southern Department and his titular superior. A feud ensued. In his letters to Williams, carefully enclosed in his own correspondence to the Governor and Committee, Simpson attacked the older man's competence, and verbal hostilities ended only with the retirement of Williams, which left Simpson unchallenged in North America.

Simpson's celebrated conflict with McLoughlin also revealed the malevolent aspect of his character. Though the chief factor's conduct in the dispute over trading policies on the Pacific Coast had been highly provocative, Simpson's subsequent response to the death of young McLoughlin revealed a cold insensitivity which cannot be reconciled with humaneness and decency. As Dr. W. Kaye Lamb has observed, "his action was arbitrary and callous, and constitutes one of the most serious blots on his career."

But the overweening passion for power and status and the inflated vanity which produced such vindictiveness also contributed to the immense force and vitality which made Simpson the great viceroy of the fur trade. His

demonstrations of endurance and physical fitness might have seemed to some to be carried to a ridiculous extreme, but they created for him an awesome reputation among his subordinates which was highly useful in producing deference to his will and in promoting efficiency. His lightning canoe voyages became legendary and his impressive visits to trading posts to the skirl of bagpipes and the salutes of the fort's guns were long-remembered spectacles. Archibald McDonald in 1828 described the pomp with which the governor made an entrance:

"As we waft along under easy sail, the men with a clean change and mounting new feathers, the Highland bagpipes in the Governor's canoe was echoed by the bugle in mine, then these were laid aside, on nearer approach to port, to give free scope to the vocal organs of about eighteen Canadians to chant one of those voyageur airs peculiar to them, and always so perfectly rendered. Our entry to Jack River House about seven p.m. was certainly more imposing than anything hitherto seen in this part of the Indian country. Immediately on landing, His Excellency was preceded by the piper from the water to the Fort, while we were received with all welcome by Messrs. Chief Trader McLeod and Dease, Mr. Robert Clouston, and a whole host of ladies . . ."

Moberly many decades later still recalled the details of a journey which he as a young clerk had made with Simpson. Though the governor was then over seventy, he made no concessions to his age, even continuing the practice of taking a morning plunge whatever the temperature.

Simpson's physical resources were astonishing. John Henry Lefroy noted after a visit with the governor in 1843 that "he is the toughest looking old fellow I ever saw, built upon the Egyptian model, height two diameters, or like one of those short square massy pillars one sees in an old country church . . . He is a fellow whom nothing will kill." Before he crumbled in his last years, Simpson had suffered only one severe illness. The death of his first child in April 1832 and the consequent prolonged illness of his young wife seem to have imposed a strain which overwhelmed him. For the next year and a half, he was dominated by a deep melancholia. He wrote, "My nerves are so much affected that when overpressed with business

I can with difficulty put pen to paper . . . I feel that my best Days are gone and that it is drawing near the time when I must withdraw from this harrassing service." But even at such time, he wrote to his friend John George McTavish, "it is strange that all my ailments vanish as soon as I seat myself in a canoe."

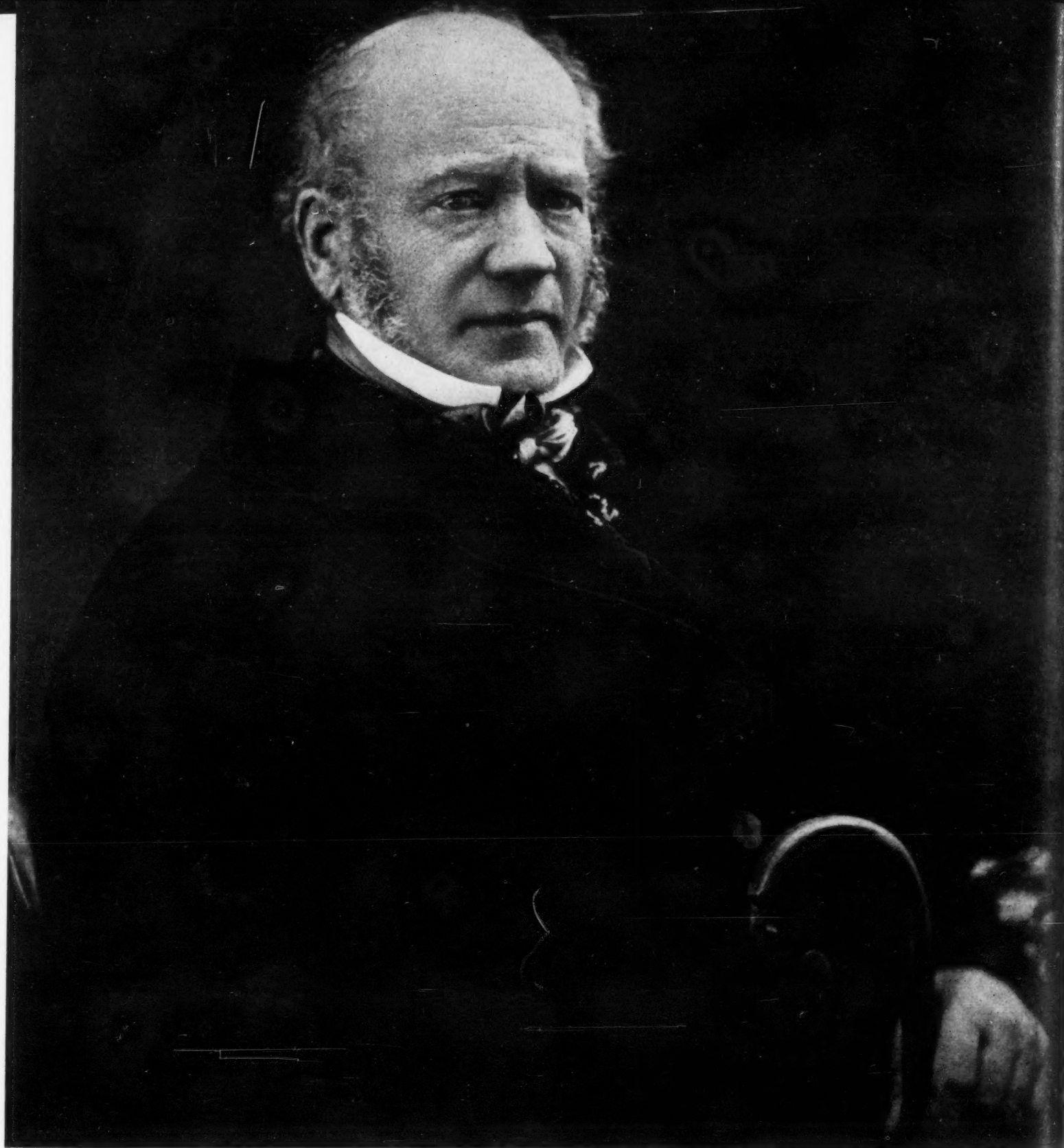
Sir George Simpson represented in purest distillation the zeal for efficiency which dominated the managers of British industrial life in the early nineteenth century. Beckles Willson has perceptively described him as "a man of merciless method, unsparing of detail when it conduced to clarity or order, no matter what pains it cost his clerks or what time it involved. . . . He carried the practice of economy to great lengths, but as was frequently remarked by his subordinates, not a little of his economy was of the penny-wise-pound-foolish variety." Though by no means deficient in imagination, his contributions were primarily those of an executive and an administrator rather than as a maker of high policy. The basic policies of the Hudson's Bay Company were laid down by an able governing board in London; they directed the institution of the economy measures which Simpson faithfully carried out; they decreed the trading policies which he executed.

A possible exception and, if so, an important one, may have been the governor's energizing of the languishing trade on the Pacific Coast as a result of his celebrated visits in 1824-25 and 1828. Certainly the Columbia district, which was to be an object of Anglo-American controversy for the next generation, had fallen on dark days in the last years of the North West Company, when steadily mounting losses had caused that association to contemplate its abandonment. Some have given Simpson credit for the transformation of this liability into an asset, thus preserving the trade of the lower Columbia for the Hudson's Bay Company. An eminent historian has said that by "Simpson's elimination of major losses the Company had found it possible to remain in the valley of the lower Columbia" and that by his vigorous measures of economy he reduced Oregon "to economic vassalage to a British corporation." Certainly Simpson's thoroughgoing economy measures were important in making the district profitable. But to assign him the distinction of "saving" Oregon for the Company is to overstate his role. The Pacific Coast management of the North West Company had been highly inefficient; an improvement in the trade of the district began soon after the coalition; and, in prosecuting his measures in the Columbia basin, Simpson merely speeded up the process. The London board, well aware of the strategic significance of the territory advised him as early as 1822 that it should be kept as a protection for the more valuable districts to the north if losses could be reduced



Hudson's Bay House, Simpson's Lachine residence, where he died in 1860.





*Sir George Simpson in his later years. This copy of a daguerreotype, by Notman, who established his Montreal studio in 1856, is the only known photograph of "the Little Emperor."*

to relatively small proportions. In the Columbia as elsewhere, Simpson made no distinctive contribution to basic policy. So to state is not to underestimate his achievements.

Simpson to his subordinates seemed the "Little Emperor"; he had no such illusion—the Governor and Committee exercised close and constant supervision. But the attributes of George Simpson were precisely attuned to

the requirements of his position. He became a nearly perfect instrument of Company policies and, as his knowledge of the fur trade grew into intimacy, an increasingly valued adviser. When Governor John Henry Pelly went to St. Petersburg in the summer of 1838 to negotiate a trading agreement with the Russian American Company, Simpson accompanied him.\* Though his place was that of a subordinate and he was occasionally called upon to per-

\* *Beaver*, Autumn 1960.

form tasks appropriate to a servant, Simpson's role in the success of the negotiations was a major one. His appointment as Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land the next year symbolized a higher status for him in the affairs of the Company, as his knighthood in 1841 indicated to society at large that the illegitimate lad from Loch Broom had "arrived" as a man of consequence.

By the 1840s he had become in all but name a key member of the Company's governing board; in London he sat in the inner councils of Beaver House and, on occasion, even wrote the dispatch which was to guide his conduct for the forthcoming year. While he was in America, his advice was sought on every important issue. During the Oregon crisis, when the fate of the Company's Pacific Coast trade was at stake, Simpson participated in the formulation of strategy and tactics both in the strengthening of the Company's position in the disputed territory and in efforts to prod a reluctant Foreign Office to take a firm line with the Americans. These associations with great men and great issues nourished Simpson's vanity; involvement with "cloak and dagger" projects such as the expedition of Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour to Oregon appealed to his conspiratorial sense. To be called into secret consultation with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, to act as their trusted emissary carrying important dispatches to the British minister in Washington—this was sheer delight.

During the 1840s and 1850s Sir George Simpson thus enjoyed great power and prestige. In his last years, when the monopoly was under attack by those in Britain and Canada who sought to open the west to settlement, he became a venerated elder statesman offering counsel to a board with a high proportion of new members. But his area of autonomy remained rigidly circumscribed. On the few occasions in which he attempted to extend it he was reminded that the board was jealous of its authority and was not prepared to surrender any of its powers even to a trusted subordinate. In 1846, when he requested the right to appoint clerks in the Montreal Department, he received a curtly negative response from Governor Pelly, who chastised him for "improper interference."

The function of the North American governor was to translate policies into efficient operations and maximum profits. This Simpson did with the use of whatever methods were most effective. His highest ethic was the advancement of his Company's interests. Personally incorruptible, he had all the cynicism of a Walpole with regard to the corruptibility of others. Opposition fur traders could be bought if it was not expedient to destroy them; politicians could be bribed to further the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company or his private business ventures. Simpson's

appraisal of the nature of politics and of politicians seemed to be justified by some successes; its limitations were emphasized by at least one notable failure.

The presence of the Company's fur trading posts on the edges and in the midst of Canadian settlement was a perpetual source of irritation to farmers and lumbermen. The lease of the King's Posts, which conferred a monopoly of hunting and trading in the vicinity of these trading posts on the north side of the St. Lawrence, was particularly irritating to French Canadians who lived nearby. Before and after the Rebellions of 1837-38, attacks on the special privileges of an "alien" monopoly were always certain to evoke an enthusiastic response, and politicians naturally pursued this popular line. Simpson could not prevent such attacks, nor could he publicly answer them since he was required to accept the Company's policy of silence. But through a combination of charm and more material influences he was able to blunt actions against the Company or to postpone them. French and English Canadian politicians alike referred to Sir George as a charming fellow, lavish in his hospitality and generous to his friends. His lobbyist, the King's Printer, Stuart Derbishire, kept him informed on the state of feeling of the legislature and the government, and on the key men to be influenced on particular measures. Sometimes what was required was merely a token of esteem such as an Indian tent, a canoe, or a package of buffalo tongues. When one politician suggested that his acceptance of such gifts might cause him to be suspected of taking bribes, Derbishire assured him that "Sir George only pleaded his cause with many tongues." Or the gift might be as little as an occasional box of cigars. Derbishire in 1852 wrote to Simpson:

"I would like a box of cheroots for Bouchette. You may send me one or two to spare, & if I do not place them you shall have them back. It is a delicate operation you know, & one cannot make opportunities but only act when they make themselves. I told Bouchette you wished to shake hands with him & thank him. He said, I like Sir George, everyone does—and his Agent has such an undeniable way with him."

Such trifling favours of course could only enhance good will among those already favourably disposed. In the influencing of important issues, more substantial resources were required. Simpson's intimacy with Prime Minister Sir Francis Hincks and John Ross, a prominent member of his cabinet, which was highly useful to the Company and himself, was based both on mutual regard and mutual interest. He offered and they seem to have accepted large sums of money for their aid in furtherance of some of his private projects, and Hincks was influential in securing the award to the Company of responsibility for distribut-



ing annual government payments to the Indians in certain sections of the Great Lakes area, a most advantageous arrangement for the Company. Ross's testimony before the Select Committee of 1857 in London was highly favourable to the Company's interests, as he took pains to inform Derbshire on his return.

The effect of Simpson's "influence peddling" in moderating Canadian policy towards the Company should not be exaggerated—at best it was of small moment—and his venture into lobbying in Washington was disastrous. His efforts to bribe members of Congress to pass legislation authorizing the purchase of the Company's possessory rights in Oregon which had been guaranteed by the Treaty of 1846, had the reverse effect from what he intended. They cost the Company thousands of dollars and compromised its claims in negotiations with the United States government.

Judged in terms of accepted twentieth century business standards, Simpson's practices may seem immoral and at times patently corrupt. By the code of his own day his business operations were not reprehensible. His contemporaries appraised business methods on pragmatic rather than on ethical grounds. Judged in these terms his management of the Company's North American business was a great success.

The environment of the fur trade changed drastically in the 1850s, but the old man with singular flexibility adapted himself to the new conditions. The Chicago and Galena Railroad reached the Mississippi in 1852; the Illinois Central four years later. In 1858, construction was begun on a railroad between the headwaters of the Red River and St. Paul, and in 1859 steamboat service was inaugurated on that river. Simpson's response was to seek to use these developments in the service of the fur trade. In 1858 he and another elder statesman of the Company, Edward "Bear" Ellice, visited St. Paul, and as a result of their recommendations the Company established an agency in that city and in 1859 began the shipment of goods by Montreal to St. Paul and thence by stage and steamboat to Fort Garry. The new route was so cheap and efficient that by 1862 the Governor and Committee had decided to make it the ordinary means of supplying its chartered territory.

But Simpson saw that however efficient the Company might be the halcyon days were over. Civilization had caught up with the ancient fur trade monopoly, and it must make terms with the new era or be swept away. He had foreseen this eventuality since the 1840s and warned his superiors to be prepared for it. Though in his testimony before the Parliamentary Select Committee of 1857 he might re-assert that Rupert's Land was unfit for settle-

ment, he knew that neither constant reiteration of this hoary myth nor the denial to overly curious visitors of access to the Company's territories would long postpone the inevitable. In 1856 he had pointed out to the new governor in London, John Shepherd, that the press and the public of Canada and the United States were displaying a steadily growing interest in the character of southern Rupert's Land and that an attack on the charter was impending. Now was the time, he counselled, for the Company to seek to sell its chartered rights to the British government—the price, he suggested, should be £1,000,000 sterling. The surrender of these rights, Simpson shrewdly observed, would cost the Company little, for it could continue as a private enterprise to maintain its trading dominance by virtue of its superior organization and resources, it would enjoy the protection of British law, and it would escape the odium surrounding it as a privileged monopoly. These were the views of a sagacious business statesman, and subsequent events vindicated the wisdom of his analysis.

But though the aged governor's mind remained unimpaired the magnificent physique which had sustained him through decades of unremitting activity suddenly began to give way. To the end he continued to drive himself with relentless force. Until his last year he continued to make inspection tours into the interior; and appropriately, when he was unable to continue, he died.

During his last five years, his eyesight deteriorated; in 1858 he wrote that he was nearly blind. His health grew increasingly precarious, and serious illnesses which forced him to his bed warned his friends that death was near. But at the beginning of 1860 he summoned up unexpected reserves. He convinced himself that he could undertake one more journey to Rupert's Land to preside over his council. This time to conserve his energies he arranged to travel by rail to St. Paul and by steamer on the Red River to Fort Garry. He wrote to the younger Edward Ellice that he was particularly anxious to participate because of the important changes being effected in the transportation of goods. He did not arrive at his destination. When he reached St. Paul, he realized that he could go no further and was forced to return to Lachine. Again by some miracle he rallied. Somehow he stayed alive, perhaps in anticipation of the role he was to play during the visit of the Prince of Wales. Simpson throughout his life had had a keen sense of the dramatic, but no entrance of his could have surpassed his exit. The little giant of the fur trade, already a living legend, had just received the supreme accolade. Dugald Mactavish observed, "The Little Emperor's light has gone out just after he basked in a final blaze of glory." ♦



# Yuletide

BY ED McNALLY

When Christmas comes in the Eastern Arctic, Eskimo families from many scattered camps converge on a settlement for a few days of rejoicing and merry-making. They eagerly throng to church and here in an Anglican Mission an RCAF chaplain helped by an Eskimo lay preacher takes Christmas service. Mothers sit by the stove not so much for warmth but because with babies on their backs they cannot arrange themselves in the pews.





One of the few places where Eskimos and Indians mingle is Great Whale River, where these drawings were made. During the festivities some four hundred Eskimos gather, some from hundreds of miles away, and here, too, are about a hundred Crees. Then there are visiting and games and dancing and movies; gifts and parties which are the share of the 'southerners' dwelling in the north, government people, service men, missionaries, traders, teachers. Outdoor events include a tug-of-war, an old-time Eskimo sport; shooting, and at seventeen below zero, with a wild assortment of guns, some astonishing marksmanship is demonstrated; and races, on foot and with teams. Above, two entrants in the boys' komatik (dog-sled) race get into difficulties with pugnacious huskies.



The girls' snowshoe race is shown on the cover, and some of the girls, who show a fine burst of speed, look suspiciously like grandmothers. Snowshoes, incidentally, were a device of the Indians who needed them on the softer, deeper snow that fell to their lot. Everyone comes in their gayest clothes, print dresses, bright kerchiefs, check shirts, and their best skin boots which look clumsy for dancing but prove no hindrance to keeping up a square dance at terrific pace for half an hour or longer. Any number of couples join in and with short pauses between dances, keep going to lively music of jigs, barn-dances, polkas most of the night—or all night for that matter, since no one cares when dances begin or end. Between sports and dance, there is a movie show and dinner.





Indoor events take place in an aircraft hangar, to which great tubfuls of beef stew are rushed from the radar-base kitchens to Indians and Eskimos hungry from a day of outdoor sports. After ice-cream and cookies and quantities of tea it is time for Santa Claus. The interpreter calls a name and the entire family climbs the platform to receive a big carton of treasures, toys and clothing, food and household goods—each box packed to suit that particular family. Later comes the dance, pictured on the cover, to end the annual party that is a joint effort of many groups interested in the Canadian North.

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# McCLURE AND THE PASSAGE

BY L. H. NEATBY

Last autumn Dr. Neatby, who has for many years made a study of the expeditions that sought the North West Passage, brought to light one of those documents that bring joy to the historian. A diary written in his native German by the man who interpreted Eskimo for McClure on his expedition of 1850-54 was traced through the man's descendants in Nova Scotia and the family, in whose possession it had been kept, made it available to Dr. Neatby. Author of "In Quest of the North West Passage," Professor Neatby is head of the department of classics at Acadia University.

ONE of the quaintest and by no means the least heroic of Canadian Arctic travellers is the pious evangelist Johann August Miertsching. Born in Saxony in 1817, and trained as a missionary of the Moravian brotherhood, he spent the early years of his manhood at Ogak on the Labrador coast where he learned the ways of his Eskimo flock and acquired great proficiency in its language. In 1849 he came home on furlough and was immediately enlisted by the British Admiralty to serve as interpreter on the expedition then setting out to make search for Sir John Franklin by way of Bering Strait. As there was no space in Captain Collinson's *Enterprise* he was given a temporary berth in the second vessel, the *Investigator*, and remained with her for the entire five years of that varied and all but disastrous cruise. His personal record of the voyage is a most valuable document, furnishing, as it does, an outsider's view, and supplying details which contemporary chroniclers either ignored or thought it prudent to suppress.

Though much applauded at the time, the *Investigator's* captain (Commander McClure) has not enjoyed the rank in history to which the discovery of Prince of Wales Strait

and the achievement of the North West Passage would seem to entitle him. The harshness of his discipline, doubts as to his discretion, censure (not wholly deserved) of his conduct in breaking away from Collinson to cruise off on his own, the subsequent revelation of Franklin's priority as discoverer of the Passage—all these have left him with a reputation that is somewhat ambiguous, and decidedly not of the first rank among explorers of his day.

Contemporary publications, of which there are two in English, do not provide material for a full and just estimate of his merits. He produced no memoir of his own, but permitted Captain Sherard Osborn to compile from his journals a lively, interesting, but quite uncritical panegyric. On the contrary, the ship's surgeon, Alexander Armstrong, in a weighty and impressive volume, draws a most unfriendly portrait of his captain. Both records are biased and need to be checked against a less prejudiced source. It is this which Miertsching is able to provide.

Shortly after the cruise ended he published a German and (in abridgement) a French memoir of the voyage in which he alluded to certain occurrences which Osborn ignored, and Armstrong passed over lightly. But these



accounts also were somewhat toned down to spare the feelings of former comrades; and Miertsching's original journal rested in the family archives for over a century until through the kindness of Professor Jannasch of Göttingen, Germany, and of Mr. Niels W. Jannasch of Seabright, Nova Scotia, respectively grandson and great-grandson of the diarist, the writer was permitted to read Miertsching's unedited "*Reisebeschreibung einer Nordpol Expedition zur Aufsuchung Sir John Franklins und die Entdeckung der Nordwestl. Durchfahrt in den Jahren 1850-1851-1852-1853-1854.*" Though not exactly a day by day record, for Miertsching lost his diary when the ship was abandoned, and reconstructed it (from January 1850 to April 1853) with the aid of the captain's journal and his own pencilled notes, this is the nearest thing we have to an objective eye-witness account of the cruise.

The two ships quitted Plymouth on 20 January 1850. After a few days Collinson, finding it difficult to sail in company in the stormy weather then prevailing, appointed McClure a rendezvous at Cape Lisburne on the Alaskan shore, and sailed away leaving the slower *Investigator* behind.

For some months Miertsching's life was made unhappy by the quarrelsome disposition of his associates. The officers were young and inexperienced; the captain unsympathetic, irritable and exacting. The loss of the foretopmast in a squall caused open and bitter wrangling. Towards their guest both captain and wardroom officers were courteous and considerate, and he tried hard to adjust himself to their ways; but found that their whisky-punch mounted to his head with an alacrity which prohibited its use. "I am, as yet, no seaman," he bashfully admits.

Until he acquired a working knowledge of English he was on even more distant terms with the men than with those who commanded them. "Though I have at times met insolent and godless men, so were they angels compared to these shameless sinners." Their amusements were a riot of noise, dancing and ribaldry, presided over by a negro, "an entirely God-forgotten fellow," who had escaped from slavery by way of Canada and served some years in the merchant marine.

McClure controlled this throng with a harshness rarely employed in the Arctic service. On April 6th, Miertsching records, a seaman was given four dozen lashes, "a frightful punishment, but with so lawless a crowd such harshness is imperative." On another occasion no fewer than five men were punished for their share in a brawl. *Pace* Miertsching this brutality was a reflection less on the disorders of the men than on the discord and insecurity of their officers. The crew of the *Enterprise* were also a scratch lot, hurriedly recruited for that particular service; but in a cruise of sixty-four months Collinson punished two



Johann August Miertsching, from a daguerreotype belonging to his family.

men only—in both instances for the shameful offence of theft. Sir Edward Belcher, of all arctic commanders the least popular with the commissioned ranks, seems to have governed his men with equal humanity and moderation.

At the east end of Magellan Strait the *Investigator* was met and taken in tow by H.M. steamer *Gorgon*. Thus assisted she overhauled the *Enterprise* toiling through the channel in rain and heavy weather. Collinson proposed that Miertsching should now transfer to his own ship where he properly belonged, but the latter, fearing that his baggage would be drenched and his books spoiled, pleaded for a respite until arrival at Honolulu. McClure courteously seconded the request and Collinson yielded. He paid dearly for this compliance: had he had Miertsching with him to question the natives at Cambridge Bay he might have actually made the discovery of Franklin's fate which he was to miss by so narrow a margin.

On emerging from the strait the two ships quitted their tow and were themselves soon after parted in a gale. A furious storm drove the *Investigator* off course to the south, and this loss was only slowly repaired as the winds veered from north to west. The fear that the *Enterprise*, a better sea-boat, would leave them completely behind and carry out her arctic mission alone heightened the chronic ill-humour. "A demon of discord seemed to have fixed his abode among us." Labouring northwards the ship was struck by a squall when First Lieutenant Haswell, officer of the watch, was momentarily absent from the deck, and carried away her topmasts. The captain was "inhuman in his fury." When repairs were effected—no easy matter in "a rolling ship and plunging waves"—Haswell was placed

under arrest and kept in confinement until arrival at Honolulu several weeks later. As the luckless officer suffered acutely from seasickness and as the ship had almost capsized in a squall a few hours before, one wonders why the captain was not himself on deck at the time.

They reached Honolulu on July 1 and learned to their disappointment that the *Enterprise* had taken on supplies and sailed only the day before. The *Investigator* stayed for four days, but in this short period of relaxation the differences amongst her officers were composed. The reconciliation was reasonably thorough and permanent, partly, no doubt, because an important cause of tension was removed; they now felt sure of overtaking the *Enterprise*. Collinson, it was ascertained, intended to make the long circuit around the west end of the Aleutian island chain to Bering Strait. McClure resolved to take the short cut through it and, barring shipwreck in those dangerous waters, was sure of reaching Cape Lisburne in time.

Miertsching was growing more at home and using his improved English to exhort and convert the men. McClure, too religious to discountenance this directly, feared that a knot of "pietists" would add to the discord of a ship already too much divided. He therefore more than ever encouraged the noisy recreations of the men, and privately warned Miertsching that British seamen "were not such simple folk as my Eskimos": Christian meekness was all right on land but at sea "a man must have spirit and hold his head high." The young German retorted that, though he was a true Christian, he held his head as high as any officer in Her Majesty's Navy. The captain replied that "I was no true seaman, or I would think otherwise," and told the story of a naval officer who ended the attempt to reconcile the practice of his profession with the strict principles of religion by resigning his commission, receiv-

ing ordination and writing religious tracts for "old wives." Miertsching replied that tracts were becoming popular reading among the hardened seamen of McClure's own fo'c'sle. At this the captain broke off the dialogue, and asked for an air on the guitar.

The passage through the dangerous, fog-infested Aleutian channels occupied several days: "Since a week there is neither sun, moon nor stars, and the current is almost driving the ship backwards or sideways." A lift in the fog gave the ship her bearings at the critical moment; she came safely through, and on July 30th put into Kotzebue Sound on the Alaskan shore. There the rescue ship *Plover* was stationed during the years of the Franklin search to keep a lookout in the Strait and glean all possible information from the Eskimos, some of whom had gathered in a settlement on the shore nearby. Miertsching expressed an ardent hope for the conversion of these folk, but observing that Commander Moore had admitted his female interpreter to share his cabin, and that "*eine Anglo-Eskimoh Colonie*" was forming on land he wisely judged that the officers and men of the *Plover* were not the proper persons to undertake it.

On learning that Moore had seen nothing of the *Enterprise* McClure lost no time in resuming his voyage and off Cape Lisburne encountered the frigate *Herald* which had come up to supply the *Plover* and was making a cruise in and beyond Bering Strait—she was soon to discover the historic Herald Island—before returning to her hydrographic work on the Lower California shore. Her captain, Kellett, stated that the *Enterprise* had not yet arrived and that if Collinson had adhered to his plan of sailing around the Aleutians he must be several days behind. McClure found himself for the moment free to choose his own course, for Collinson had so little expected the *Investi-*

*Discovery of the Princess Royal Islands, where the "Investigator" wintered 1850-51, by Lt. S. G. Cresswell.*







The "Investigator" seemed doomed when caught between icebergs in August 1851 off northwest Banks Island.

gator to reach Cape Lisburne ahead of him that his orders made no provision for that contingency. McClure had the effrontery to inform Kellett, so Armstrong asserts, that the *Enterprise* had already passed the straits—unobserved in the fog—and that it was his duty to follow in her tracks. Kellett advised him to wait for two days, but would not take the responsibility of restraining him by a positive order.

The *Investigator's* captain has been much criticized for thus defying the known wishes of the Admiralty that the two ships should not separate in the pack ice; but by Collinson's own admission he was not technically guilty of disobedience: only a very scrupulous man would have hesitated to make full use of the time that had been gained by the dash through the Aleutians. The fault, if any, lies rather with the senior officer who gave an ambiguous order than with the junior who strained it to advance his personal reputation.

Quitting Cape Lisburne on August 1st he worked his way between the pack and the continental shore along the Alaskan coast, past the Mackenzie delta to Cape Parry where the ice opened up to the north and guided him almost automatically into and nearly through the now celebrated waterway of Prince of Wales Strait. In late September the ship was beset near the Princess Royal Islands, and after being badly battered in the storm-vexed pack was lifted up and flung like a piece of driftwood on the sloping edge of a floe. "We have seen a storm at sea when almost all the upper masts went by the board . . . , but each one of us declares that ten storms at sea are less terrifying than what we experienced last night." When the ship was righted and securely frozen in, McClure, with the sailing-

master, Stephen Court, took a sledge party ahead to the top of the strait, and proved it continuous with Melville Sound. This made the North West Passage complete. By lucky and daring opportunism McClure had achieved in a few weeks the feat at which many generations had laboured in vain.

With the approach of spring (1851) three sledge parties were sent out to search the neighbouring shores, and in this connection Miertsching tells of a most disagreeable occurrence. The mate, Wyniatt, to whom had been assigned the survey of Victoria Island to the north and east, came back to the ship after an outing of eighteen days. He had broken his chronometer, he explained, and having no watch, had come back to replace it. McClure, who at the first glimpse of the returning party supposed that it had achieved the supreme success of finding traces of the lost ships, was in a fury of rage and disappointment. He ordered his unlucky subordinate to be off again within twelve hours, and to reach his assigned destination of Cape Walker (north of Prince of Wales Island) before turning back—and that without a chronometer. "When no chronometers were in use people had travelled all over the seas and discovered great continents!" Since it was too late to correct the error, thus to hamper Wyniatt and rob his observations of half their value seems a petty and hysterical revenge. Later events were to give a tragic significance to the young officer's want of initiative. Had he not shortened his journey by this interruption, and had he crossed the ice of McClintock Channel, as his orders to make for Cape Walker would have required, he would probably have met Sherard Osborn on the opposite shore and by making the position of the *Investigator* known

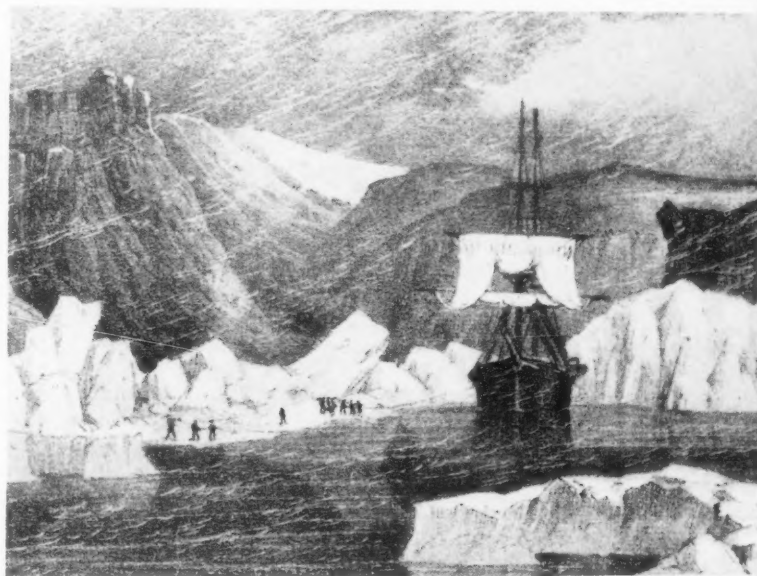
have spared her crew the long and agonizing detention which was to cost him his reason and several of his shipmates their lives.

All detachments were back in June and in the next month the ship made her way up the strait to the fringe of Melville Sound. A century later the *St. Roch* and the *Labrador* were to make the crossing of this ice basin, but for the sailing ship there was no thoroughfare. "From the masthead was no water to be seen, but frightful ice pouring down on us from the Polar sea." McClure retraced his course to Nelson Head at the south end of the strait, and rejecting the prudent policy of returning by the way he had come, resolved on rounding Banks Land, the extent of which was, of course, unknown. Sachs Harbour, Point Kellett and Point Alfred on the west coast were passed in turn; north of the last the ship was pinned to the shore by ice and almost wrecked in a westerly gale. On the verge of winter she drifted free and after a nightmare ride in the wind-driven pack crawled clear into the refuge of Mercy Bay. Armstrong says that if the captain's nerve had held he might have got across the Sound to Melville Island, and this is, in part, confirmed by the trusty Court. His choice, if choice he had, was unlucky: the opportunity never recurred.

In the course of the winter the long-suppressed animosity between the captain and Dr. Armstrong exploded in a bitter quarrel. Miertsching, who alone mentions this, assigns no reason; but it is not hard to guess. Their entanglement in a "polar pack" of unknown extent and monstrous

proportions made a detention of more than one winter not improbable, and McClure, determined to stay with the ship, if need be, for more than one more season, was reducing rations to a level which the surgeon declared too low for the maintenance of health.

They remained prisoners on that dreary coast for eighteen months—from September 1851 to April 1853. In April of 1852 McClure, with Court, crossed the ice to Melville and left a record at Winter Harbour. The discovery that no rescue from the east had been able to come so far emphasized his isolation and dependence on his own resources. The following months proved how inadequate these were. The ice of the harbour did not break up that



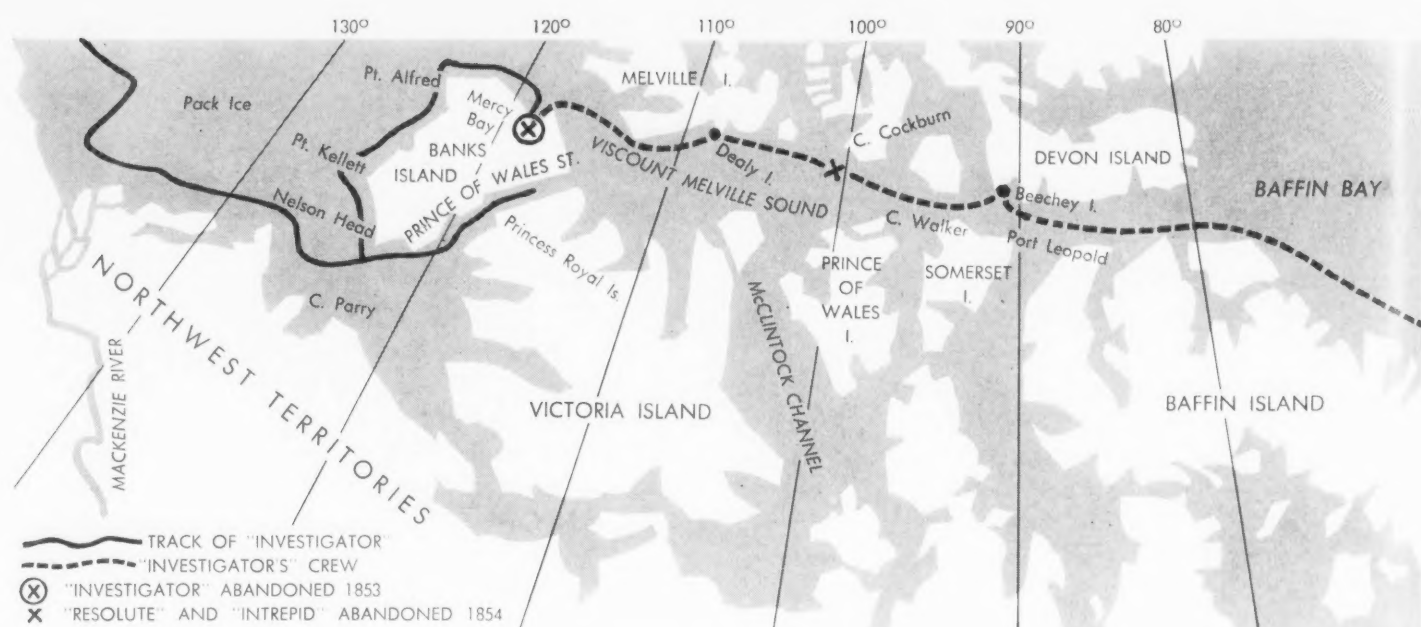
"Investigator" secured near a headland on north Banks Island in September 1851, by Cresswell.

Captain Robert McClure, from a painting by Stephen Pearce.



summer and the crew found themselves badly reduced by hunger and sickness and condemned to a third winter. The better shots among them hunted assiduously, but could not provide for a company numbering sixty-six: they obtained enough fresh meat to check but not wholly to avert the onset of scurvy. With the approach of winter Wyniatt became noisily insane, and in those restricted quarters tormented his comrades by singing, shouting and cursing at all hours. His servant and Miertsching were the only persons whom he would allow near him, and when civilly requested by the latter to make less noise he replied that not until the captain and Dr. Armstrong were dead would he cease from his bellowings. At one time he threatened to murder the officers and set fire to the ship with such apparent sincerity that it was thought advisable to





keep him in irons until he grew calmer. In the twelve months of 1852 Armstrong recorded a loss of weight throughout the ship's company averaging 35 pounds. The strongest and most courageous intensified the hunt for caribou and hare, but found that in the depth of winter the cheaper firearms were useless: barrels would crack and springs snap in the intense frost. Miertsching's hands became so raw from frostbite that he employed sailors to carry his gun, rewarding them with the blood of the kill and the undigested grasses in the first stomach.

In March of '53 McClure announced his purpose of remaining with the ship for another season with twenty of the fittest men: the feeble must make their way out as best they could, one party down Prince of Wales Strait and on to the Mackenzie delta, the other through Barrow Strait to Port Leopold on Somerset Island where a food cache and boat had been left by an earlier rescue expedition. "In six weeks must we with those unfit to remain with the ship harness ourselves to laden sledges and draw them hundreds of miles through snow and ice. How many of us will in this way see Europe? The answer is—No one!"

The dramatic arrival at the Bay of Mercy of Lieutenant Pim bearing the intelligence that Kellett with the rescue ships *Resolute* and *Intrepid* was lying at the islet of Dealy on the Melville Island shore occurred just in time to avert a second Franklin disaster. McClure now resolved to unload his weaker men on Kellett, and with the rest make a last attempt to extricate the ship in the coming summer. He journeyed with Pim to Dealy Island to obtain his senior's consent to this arrangement, but unluckily Lieutenant Cresswell and Miertsching arrived a few days after him with a detachment of his discarded seamen, and Kellett was so shocked at the condition to which they had been reduced by famine and scurvy that he absolutely refused to sanction any further demand on their comrades. The matter was hotly discussed, says Miertsching, between

the two officers until Kellett cut off the debate by handing his junior a written order to abandon the *Investigator* and bring all his men to Dealy Island unless he could obtain twenty men to work her, all pronounced medically fit and volunteers for the service. On McClure's pleading the hostility of Dr. Armstrong to himself, Kellett appointed his own surgeon, Domville, to assist in the medical survey and ensure an impartial decision.

Domville's three hundred mile round trip to Mercy Bay was wasted—few volunteers were forthcoming, and the men were pronounced, almost without exception unfit. The order to desert the ship was therefore carried out. On June 17th Kellett and Miertsching saw their approaching sledges and sallied out to meet them. "Their pitiful appearance will I never in my life forget. On each of the four sledges were lashed two of the sick; some not quite so disabled were assisted by their stronger comrades; others supported themselves by holding on to the sledges, and these were drawn by men so weak that every few minutes they would fall and must be helped to their feet by the captain or the officers. The mournful picture which they presented reminded me forcibly of the unlucky Franklin expedition."

As this picture of the men's condition is confirmed by McDougall, master of the *Resolute* and (in more reserved language) by Dr. Armstrong, it is a reasonable inference that McClure knew all along that the ship must be deserted and that his opposition to such a step was mere posturing—an astute but rather shabby manoeuvre to shirk blame for the loss of the *Investigator* and to put on Kellett the onus of resolving a disagreeable situation which he had had no share in creating. Kellett probably felt and resented this at the time, but the full significance of McClure's sharp practice was not revealed until two years later.

It seems also that McClure in order to represent the voyage as one of untarnished achievement, and to mini-

mize the frequent discords and the extremities to which the men had been reduced, wished to suppress all personal records of the voyage except his own. He had promised Miertsching that if the ship were abandoned he would bring him his journal; but this pledge he failed to redeem. All officers, he explained must be treated alike, so as he could not bring all their journals he left the entire lot behind. The excuse was a feeble one, as Miertsching seems to have felt. He had given up several years of a beloved mission to join the service of a foreign power that could

'Investigators' aboard, but were again beset and spent the winter of '53-'54 in the open pack near Cape Cockburn, and not much more than a hundred miles east of their former station. In the spring Kellett sent back two sledge parties, one to search for traces of Collinson, now two years missing, the other (under Mr. Krabbé, master of the *Intrepid*) to visit the *Investigator*, and with a special injunction to bring away all personal records. Krabbé found the ship still ice-bound and down by the head, but though he spent a week in moving her stores and caching them on



Running through a narrow channel in a snowstorm the day before "Investigator" reached the Bay of Mercy. R.O.M. Canadiana Collections

offer him neither honour nor promotion: no officer could dispute his claim to a slight privilege in exchange for such sacrifice, and McClure was not the man to heed him if he did. Armstrong, who was to be his captain's principal critic, did salvage his diary, but for this he was doubtless indebted to the good offices of his colleague, Dr. Domville, who bore written orders from Kellett, and was exempt from McClure's control.

The theory that McClure wished to blur the record of certain incidents which he could not wholly suppress is supported by a later occurrence. With the breakup of the ice the *Resolute* and *Intrepid* sailed for home with the

land, he brought away no journals because he could find none!

By the order of his superior, Sir Edward Belcher (then up Wellington Channel) Kellett also abandoned his ice-bound ships; all rescue crews sledged to Beechey Island whence they were evacuated by supply ships and reached England in October. Unassisted, the indestructible Collinson brought ship and crew home in the following May. They had been five and a half years away.

As McClure had no doubt anticipated, a handsome monetary reward was proposed for the discoverers of the Passage; and a Parliamentary Committee was set up to





Another drawing by Lieut. S. G. Cresswell of H.M.S. "Investigator" shows the sledge party under his command leaving Mercy Bay for Dealy Island on 15th April, 1853.

R.O.M. Canadiana Collections

examine his claim and to decide in what proportion, if any, Collinson, his commander, and Kellett, his rescuer, should share in the bounty. The former gave up the little claim he had by curtly testifying that McClure had not violated the letter of his orders by his escapade at Cape Lisburne. Kellett was in a far stronger position; all that was original in the *Investigator's* achievement was due to him; without his aid she would merely have duplicated the last Franklin voyage with a triumphant discovery followed by an overwhelming disaster. He did not grasp the point of McClure's diplomatic jockeying at Dealy Island, and it must have been with no little chagrin that he heard the latter blandly inform the Committee that the help of the *Resolute* had not been essential to his preservation: he could either have extricated his ship, or brought her men to the Port Leopold depot without assistance. He was able to make this monstrous assertion with

no apparent inconsistency, because he had never admitted failure and had contrived that the ship should be abandoned by Kellett's order, not by his. The medical testimony, which might have been embarrassing, was only partially presented. The Crimean war was on and Armstrong was at sea with the Baltic squadron; Domville was permitted by what appears to have been a somewhat pro-McClure Committee to be cautious and non-committal in his evidence. The Committee therefore awarded the entire ten thousand pounds to the officers and men of the *Investigator*, dismissing their rescuers with a brief commendation which under the circumstances was the most galling of insults. Kellett was much hurt, not for his own sake but at the slur on his crew. He would gladly, he said, contribute fifty pounds to a subscription for their benefit. The politicians who made up the Committee probably had more than an inkling that they were doing an injustice; but

were not displeased that the nature of the testimony enabled them to give a decision which if not equitable, was highly popular. McClure had what Collinson and Kellett lacked, the "colour" which wins public favour.

Miertsching's portrayal of this celebrated seaman confirms and clarifies the impressions which the careful reader gets from Osborn's glowing but somewhat evasive panegyric, and from the guarded hostility of Armstrong. He was aloof, unstable at times, with a driving ambition coupled with more selfishness and lack of scruple in achievement of his aims than quite befitted his rank and profession. Yet he was neither an unpleasing character nor unworthy of the honours he obtained. His remoteness was due more to insecurity than lack of feeling; Miertsching, the only man on board with whom he felt that he could converse freely, he treated with a uniform kindness, which the young German, though fully alive to his faults, repaid with the sincerest affection. In emergency he could overcome his diffidence and appeal to the men with force and emotion; if the lack of confidence between himself and his officers was a fault, it serves to emphasize the resolution with which he maintained discipline for a long period of hardship and privation: he welded Miertsching's "shameless sinners" into such an orderly self-respecting unit that Kellett gave him a written testimonial certifying the good conduct of the 'Investigators' while attached to his command. He had much luck on his historic voyage, but

the use he made of it marks him as a brave and skilful navigator.

It would be ungrateful to end this sketch without further notice of the diarist who has furnished most of its material. Despite the strictness of his notions and the moral courage which refused to compromise them in an unfriendly setting, Miertsching's religious zeal, untainted by sourness, his active friendliness to all ranks, and the manhood he displayed in the hunt won him a small group of converts and the respect and affection of almost the entire company. Armstrong, who disliked him, was a solitary exception: on the way home both the genial Kellett and the morose Sir Edward Belcher went out of their way to do him kindness, and "sailors with features hardened by storm and weather were not ashamed to shed tears" when they bade him a last farewell.

When his furlough expired the rulers of his Order, with the perversity which executives sometimes display, sent him, not back to his beloved Eskimos but to South Africa to practise among the Hottentots the habits and dialect learnt in Labrador. After many years service in this uncongenial field he retired to his native land where he died worn out with toil before the age of sixty. But the family connection with Canada was kept alive; his daughter wedded a Labrador missionary; there a grandson was born and today descendants of the old pioneer are living in the country whose frontiers a century ago he helped to extend.

*In May 1854 "Resolute" and "Intrepid" which had taken aboard the crew of "Investigator" were abandoned near Cape Cockburn. From a drawing by G. F. McDougall, Master of the "Resolute."*





# JUST FOR FUN

BY A. J. DALRYMPLE

COUNTLESS books have been written about the Northland; stories of discovery and trade, of high adventure and privation, and of romance at journey's end. But while travellers faced the driving blizzards of winter, and battled the hordes of flies in summer, the men living there, be it for a season or for years, made their fun where they found it and used whatever materials came to hand.

This incident happened in a barrenlands construction camp, where Cliff was the bright young barber. Cliff spent his idle time between hair-cuts banging a ping-pong ball up against the wall of Bunkhouse No. 1 where a rough shop had been set up for him. While thus engaged one summer day a shaggy carpenter entered, and he wanted to know why Cliff didn't practice on a regulation table.

"I had thought of ordering one from Winnipeg," he said. "But we will be out of here in a few months, and besides those factory-made tables are undersized. The legs are wobbly and the tops are so thin you simply can't practice tournament play on them."

The client crawled into the chair, and Cliff applied the clippers; but unknowingly Cliff had cast a seed upon the tundra; and the seed was about to sprout; and the young ping-pong plant would be nurtured by three men from the Bridge-and-Building Gang, plus a sawyer, a blacksmith and a co-operative bull-cook.

A work train had steamed up from the south the day before. It was made up of a consolidation locomotive, a drag-line, a crane, a box car loaded with ties and spikes, and another with huge bolts an inch in diameter with nuts to match; and lastly three flat cars carrying mighty 12 x 12 fir timbers, all blueprinted and marked for a trestle to be constructed over the Little Beaver River.



During the night three massive timbers disappeared. This provided a first class mystery because of the tonnage of the wood. Theft was at once ruled out because the camp was ninety miles from the nearest established settlement.

The superintendent, a rough, tough and efficient construction engineer, known as "the Little Tzar" was plainly worried. He talked it over with the chief clerk. They were agreed on one point. There would be no end of head office correspondence dealing with the unexplained loss of items of such size and value.

Meanwhile in Bunkhouse No. 8, far from the administration shack, under a thick veil of secrecy, the ping-pong table was taking shape. Although tired after a long day on the railway grade, the men shook off their lethargy at night and worked silently at their labour of love.

The carpenters brought big augers and drilled holes for the bolts. All holes were properly counter-sunk and inspected. All seams were tight. All wood was sanded and polished.

Finally the project was complete; truly an awe-inspiring sight; the greatest ping-pong table in the world; six feet wide and ten feet long; the top twelve inches thick, and the legs, six in all, 12 by 12 inches, fabricated from squared timbers; a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

Those who had contributed their brains and their brawn to this work of art, now looked admiringly upon their masterpiece.

"I wonder," mused the expert in charge of counter-sinking, "I wonder, after the construction is over, and we've all headed south, I wonder how they will get this ping-pong table out of here."

And the bull-cook answered with a sweet smile: "The only way they can get it out is to burn the building down."

The table was ready for Cliff to practise for next winter's tournament play in Winnipeg.

And then a strange thing happened. All the brawny bridge workers who had looked upon table tennis as somewhat sissy, and therefore beneath them, suddenly decided to try a hand at it. Ping-pong became a craze, and with the craze went excitement and considerable noise.

One moonlit night the superintendent happened to be passing Bunkhouse No. 8 and he heard wild cries, and a lot of running around, and what sounded suspiciously like scuffling.

"Whack her again, Bill". . . "Drive her in the corner." ". . . Whee . . . There she goes!"

As a matter of policy, the 'super' rarely invaded the privacy of a bunkhouse, but on this occasion he went to the door and looked in. The men were so engrossed in their play they did not see him. He returned to his office. There he found the chief clerk working late on correspondence, and he told him what he had seen.

The chief clerk listened sympathetically, and then said: "What do you propose to do about it?"

"Nothing," replied the official grimly. "It is too late to do anything about it now. And I certainly can't inform head office that the materials for the Little Beaver River bridge had been diverted for the manufacture of a ping-pong table. They'd think I was off my blinking noodle!"

The subject provided endless conversation.

The chief clerk told the time-keeper:

"I hate to see a big guy like the boss beaten by a mere ping-pong table."

"The boss," replied the time-keeper evenly, "was not beaten by a mere ping-pong table. He was beaten by the greatest ping-pong table in the world." ♦





# THE HISTORY OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, 1670-1870

A review of the second volume (1763-1870) of the history by  
Professor E. E. Rich published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society.

BY W. L. MORTON

THE publication of the second and final volume of Professor Rich's great history of the Hudson's Bay Company from the founding in 1670 to the surrender of governmental and proprietary rights in 1870 marks a phase, perhaps a climax, in the work of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. The noble series of volumes of journals and records reached the number of twenty. Professor Rich's two volumes are the twenty-first and twenty-second, and in a real sense crown the achievement which the first twenty volumes constitute. The retirement of Professor Rich as General Editor further emphasizes the ending of what, one trusts, is only a first phase of benevolence to scholars and lovers of history. The great Company owes something of its greatness to its awareness of history, and its readiness to acknowledge its debt to history in the publication of the volumes of the Record Society and in the maintenance of the inimitable *Beaver*, has greatly added to the lustre of its name. It is good to know that this great first phase of publication from the Company's records is to be followed by a second, if slower, issue of volumes.

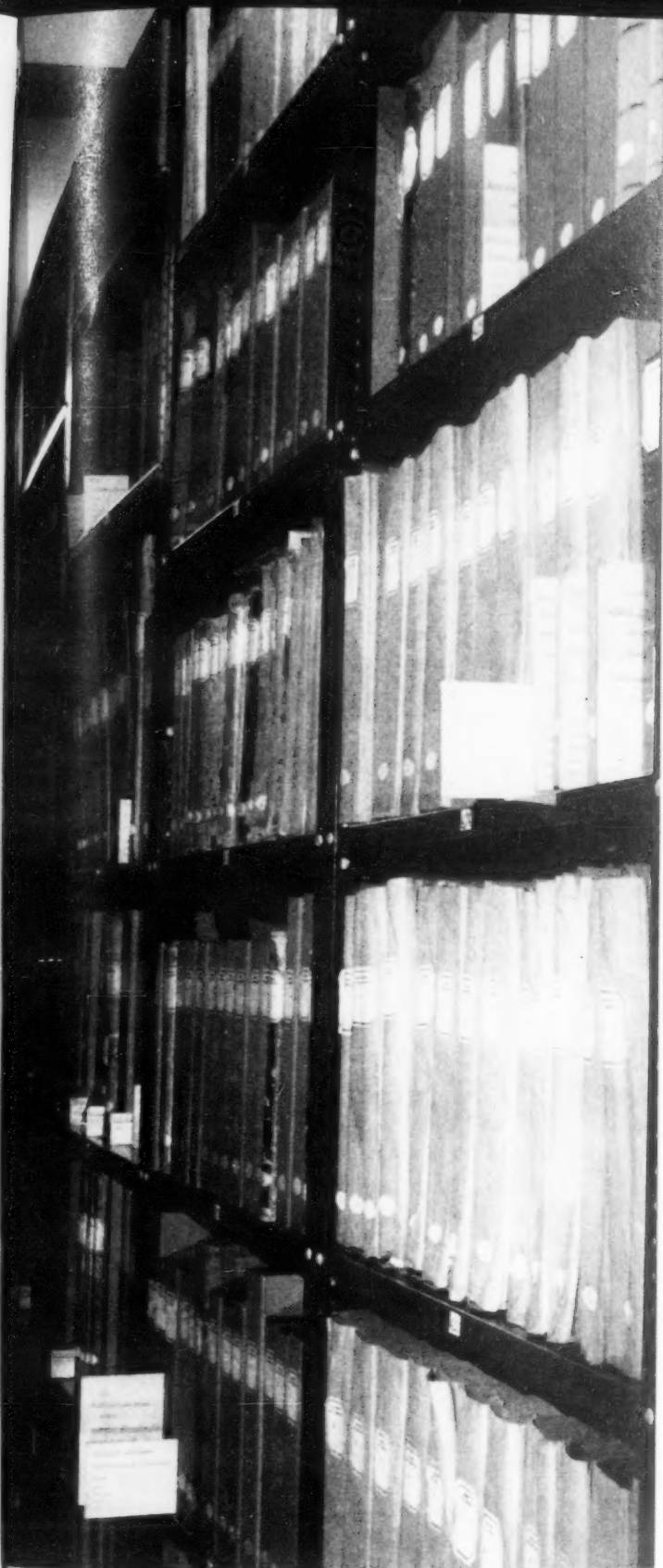
Those volumes will now be read against a background, set with mastery by Professor Rich, of the history of the Company's first two centuries told with ample and telling detail and with satisfying structural proportions. In his first volume Professor Rich brought many a mere name to life in his pages, and he does so again in this second volume. Indeed, to this reviewer, that is perhaps the principal accomplishment of the book. Well known personalities, such as Alexander Mackenzie and George Simpson possess in these pages a vitality no other has achieved. Familiar, but little known characters, such as Robert Semple and Andrew Wedderburn-Colville, now stand out in the round. Some hitherto unknown figures suddenly come forward in prominence such as George Hyde Wollaston, able re-

organizer of the Company before Wedderburn-Colville and Selkirk intervened, and commemorated in Wollaston Lake.

As in the first volume, Professor Rich remembers that he is writing a history of the Company, not a history of Rupert's Land or the fur trade. Again, this aspect of his work, the history of the policies and operations of the Company, both in direction in London and in actual trade in North America, is the freshest and most original part of the book. The effect of the great contest with the Nor'Westers, the operation of the monopoly after 1821, and the steps which preceded the transfer of Rupert's Land, have not before been available in such full and coherent detail. Again, while Professor Rich is searching in his analysis, the Company as it was before the sale of stock in 1863 emerges well. Their policies were always hard-headed but never hard-hearted. Their first duty was to earn a profit, but they never lost sight, by the standards of their times, of the welfare of their employees or of their clients, the Indian hunters. With respect to the last they were, like the missionaries of their times, and like missionaries, employers, and governments today, engaged in the subtly difficult task of conducting economic and social relations with a people of a profoundly different culture and outlook. In a conservative and realistic way, they tried to relate their pursuit of profit to the Indian's pursuit of the livelihood to which he was accustomed, and to avoid, if possible, letting the Indian have any liquor. Apart from the charity which was given when needed, it is difficult to see what more could be expected from a commercial corporation.

This definitive survey of the Company's operations reveals that they were relatively small, were always conservative in object and method, and were, on the average, very profitable. The size of its chartered territories were

*Dr. Morton, professor of Canadian history and chairman of the department of history at the University of Manitoba, has written extensively on historical subjects.*



*The essence of history—folders containing Simpson's inward letters in a section of the HBC archives.*

not reflected in the extent of its operations before 1821, and the conservative management of the years before 1821 prevailed in the years after the coalition with the North West Company.

The manner and outcome of that coalition has not been so fully or authoritatively treated before. Rich's treatment confirms the growing evidence that the Hudson's Bay Com-

pany was the winner in the contest, not on points, and not by a knock-out, simply because the North West Company in effect sought a compromise. The effect of the interventions of the Imperial government was to allow the Nor'West Montreal partners to go into the coalition with professions of triumph, but in fact the coalition of 1821 was replaced in 1824 by the absorption of the old North West interest into the Hudson's Bay Company.

Elsewhere it is probably fair to say that the book amplifies and confirms accepted versions rather than substantially alters any. The account of the origins of Selkirk's colony in Assiniboia and of the relation of its founding to the Hudson's Bay Company's invasion of the Athabasca country confirms, while it sharpens and clarifies, the work of C. B. Martin and A. S. Morton. Rich properly emphasizes the role of the attempted timber trade in Hudson Bay and the Company's need of "country provisions," if it was to compete in the Saskatchewan and Athabasca countries. But in substance he makes definitive what was already accepted.

In the years after 1821 the best part of the book is the handling of the competitive trade and the "free trade." Again, J. S. Galbraith's excellent work had in particular opened up this line of country, but Rich's handling of the two themes is outstanding in its penetration and comprehensiveness.

The clear organization and firm structure of the book are somewhat lost in the chapters on the Pacific slope. The history of the diplomacy and trade of that much contested region is, of course, a bog in which "armies whole" of historical narrators have sunk. It may be that the coherence of the narrative might have been better retained by adherence to periodical rather than geographical divisions, especially in a history of the Company.

The handling of Anglo-Russian relations on the Pacific is also not up to the standard of the rest of the book, perhaps because it is a subject which has been thoroughly ignored by British and Canadian scholars.

If these defects are real, they are offset by the excellence and the understanding with which the Company's relations with Canada from 1857 to 1870 are handled. In particular, the usually neglected period of the early 1860s is treated fully and the work of Edward Watkin and the International Financial Society given its proper setting in the world view of London finance.

It is of course much to be regretted that this large and thorough work of scholarship should not be documented. When so much is given, it is ungracious to complain, but surely the Canadian Research Council, if approached, might have ensured that this serious imperfection would have been avoided. ♦





The bell tower, which fell down in 1913, stood outside the manager's office.

## THE LADY OF THE BAY

BY EDITH MAY GRIFFIS

NEARLY fifty years ago, a few months after the northern boundary of Manitoba was extended to 60°, which included the Hudson Bay port of York Factory, Miss Griffis was appointed by the provincial department of education to open a school there for white and metis children. On her arrival she found that, not anticipating the appointment of a teacher, the Hudson's Bay Company had sent out a governess from England for the children of their officials. Miss Griffis therefore opened the first public school on Hudson Bay for the Indian and metis children who wanted to attend, and one Eskimo boy who had travelled far from his family in search of education. In the course of her years there she became known as "the Lady of the Bay."

It was July 1912 when Miss Griffis sailed from Saint John in the steamer *Stanley* which had been built in 1888 and later was used as an ice-breaker. This trip was made to take a group of government officials to Port Nelson to make a survey of the area as a possible terminus for the Hudson Bay Railway. The northward voyage through Hudson Strait was delayed by the ice and storms that often hinder shipping in those waters, but one incident as they came into the Bay remained long in the teacher's memory. In August, after leaving Mansel Island, the ship was working through an icefield some hundred miles long when the C.G.S. *Arctic* was sighted a little to the north.

"The *Stanley* carried mail for her," wrote Miss Griffis, "and we signalled to that effect. Then began the feat of getting the pouch safely to the other steamer. The mail-carrier, an intrepid little man of stocky build and with the ruddy complexion of the seasoned seaman, descended the ship's side by means of a rope ladder and leapt on to the cake of ice nearest the ship. It tipped and bobbed threateningly under his weight. Keeping his position just long enough to re-establish balance, the man sprang agilely to the next block, and in this way continued his trip across

the pack. He hesitated now and again to balance on some particularly skittish block of ice, then ran swiftly forward, and jumped on the next icy stepping stone. On reaching the side of the *Arctic* he climbed the ladder hung over its side with the speed and agility of a squirrel, and we could see the welcoming gestures of all on deck as he leapt over the rail. Having delivered the mail and stopped for a few moments' conversation, he returned to the *Stanley* over the same perilous route, with the same skill, adroitness and nonchalance he had exhibited on the outgoing trip. What we regarded as a miracle of daring achievement was merely a part of the day's work to him. It was with obvious embarrassment that he listened to the adulatory shouts and exclamations of the greenhorns on board as he came over the ship's rail again and disappeared into the depths of the ship."

Arriving at York Factory in the latter part of August, the ship anchored four miles out and through pouring rain Miss Griffis went ashore in a lifeboat in which was also Captain Bob Bartlett who was making soundings at Port Nelson. Having expected York to be still a busy thriving centre, Miss Griffis was disappointed to find few buildings, no trees, and a cool reception from the stern manager. This is her account of her introduction to her new post, taken from an unpublished book she has written about her experiences on the Bay:

WE were greeted, on landing, by Mr. George Ray, who was in charge of York Factory, the Anglican missionary Rev. Richard Faries (later Archdeacon), and two members of the HBC staff, Mr. John Macdonald, the company's bookkeeper, and Mr. William Ewen, a handsome young Scotsman employed there as clerk. Because of the deluge, the ceremony was of the briefest, and we were hurriedly conducted to a place of shelter—the men to what was known as Bachelors' Hall, and I to the factor's

residence, where I met Mr. Ray's charming wife and his five children, and Miss Anderson, who was their governess.

Mr. Ray, the district manager and chief at the post, had somehow given me a wrong impression. Was it his critical, penetrating expression? His matter-of-fact bearing? Something I could not readily analyze. A chill crept down my spinal column. He was a good looking man, too. A man in his forties, I should judge, of medium height, inclined to stoutness, shoulders slightly drooping from much desk work no doubt; dark hair flecked with grey; large round blue eyes set in a broad clean-shaven healthy looking face that ended with a generous mouth and well-formed chin. His head set on a short, thick neck was encircled by a clean collar and attractive tie. He was an Englishman true to the manner whose dress was immaculate. He wore a new navy blue suit with a white shirt and I noticed a pin ornamented his tie, a gold ring his chubby little finger.

Abrupt in speech, he was naturally inclined to be formal with an air of pompous superiority, probably augmented by his two-fold position in the Hudson's Bay Company. He was altogether in the tradition of the chief factor's of last century.

On the way from the Hayes River to the residence he had walked beside me.

"I am pleased you have arrived," he said, "but we did not begin to erect the school-building yet as we were not sure you would get here until next year. A building would be of little use without a teacher. I'm sorry, too, our accommodation for you at present is very poor but we'll do the best we can to improve conditions."

His apologetic manner and words appeased me somewhat. I assured him it would be all right—not knowing of course what it was like—but willing to try being adaptable. I had always looked upon a person who was not a good mixer with a sort of contemptuous pity.

I was then introduced to Mrs. Ray who showed me to my room where I proceeded to bathe and change for dinner. That is, I tried to change for dinner. When I started to search for a fresh costume I found to my dismay that everything I possessed was in an early or advanced stage of

dampness. Some of my things were actually wet. Even the clothes in my trunk were soaked, a condition brought about, as I later learned, from my trunk's having bounced around in the hold in several feet of water during the storm.

I sat on the edge of the bed, completely dejected. I was tired. I was chilly and I had no dry clothes. Moreover, I was thousands of miles from home, and yes, suddenly I was frightened and bitterly lonely. It was at this point that I, who had been chosen for this exacting task because of my strong character, I, upon whose ability and courage and fortitude the Department of Education of the Province of Manitoba was so heavily depending, broke down and cried like a child. Then just as I had become occupied in the unpacking of my damp belongings, the gong sounded for supper. This gong summoned everyone to meals three times each day. No one became seated until all were present at the table. I was at the mess-room door just in time to head a procession of gentlemen from the Bachelors' Hall. I soon learned if you were unfortunate enough to be late you did not appear with an offering of apologies. You simply absented yourself and missed a meal. There was no exception to this rule.

We filed into a narrow portico, lighted by a small window in the front. The doorway which faced the river gave access to a long, dingy hall. Two apertures close by, but in opposite directions, led on our left to the mess-room, on our right to a spacious living room. At the far end of this hall was another opening to a bedroom. We were conducted to a long table, where Mrs. Ray, at the end nearest the kitchen, directed us in turn to our places. Mr. Ray standing erect at the other end, introduced the new arrivals.

As our hostess became seated, there was a great clatter of chairs on the bare floor as we simultaneously dropped into our places. Golden-brown fried fish, heaped on a huge platter was a welcome sight to the hungry travellers. On the spotlessly white linen tablecloth rested heavy HBC dishes, glass salt and pepper shakers standing in pairs at regular intervals like miniature sentinels, and a knife, fork and spoon of course, at each place, a sugar bowl and pitcher of milk by a pile of cups and saucers.

Mr. Lewis Stewart, a professor in the University of Toronto sat on my right. Questions and answers played a lively game of tag. Comments on the storm in Hudson Strait and the ice-floes in Hudson Bay that the S.S. *Stanley* encountered, pricked up the ears of the listeners with renewed curiosity.

Somewhat upset, I frankly admit, and still uncomfortable in damp clothing, I refrained from entering in discussions—just answered briefly any question directed at me. I did use my eyes somewhat, however, and took note of my surroundings. I had tramped in on a clean bare floor,

Hydrographic survey party being greeted at the landing in 1910; the Rev. R. Faries at extreme left.  
R. J. Fraser





many periodical scrubblings of which had left the pine knots like round warts on a toad's back. The chair supporting me was a plain stiff-backed partner of the others. Mr. Ray had one with flat arms broadened for the comfort of his hands. The ceiling and walls were painted in a serviceable colour. Directly in front of me a plain brown-painted buffet leaned against the wall holding a few dishes. At each end of the room were two tremendous oil paintings in brown, three inch, home-made frames. The one at my right was a life-sized portrait of Horatio Nelson standing erect in his admiral's uniform. On the wall directly opposite was a painting called the Battle of the Nile [really of Trafalgar] showing the battle raging in terrific action. We were informed that the magnificent pictures of Lord Horatio Nelson and the battle scene had been accredited to the French artist Louis Dulongpré. He fought under Rochambeau in the War of American Independence, but afterwards came to Canada settling in Montreal. These pictures were in the possession of the North West Company where they hung in the Great Hall at Fort William which was then the headquarters of that Company in the west. When the two great fur companies, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company joined in 1821 these paintings were moved to the Hudson's Bay Company's fort at York Factory where, after some years, they were hung in the mess hall.

Two large, but small-paned windows topped with blinds, exposed the front view. In front of these was a smaller table, at which the Ray children, five in number, ate in silence. Two boys—the oldest and the youngest—with three girls in between. An iron box stove called the Carron with a long body and short crooked legs faced the light with its broad rectangular side and round tail obstructing my full view of Nelson's Battle of the Nile.

In between times my attention was directed occasionally to the repast and the conversation which continued as we followed the fish with some stewed prunes, more bread and butter, then tea and plain cake. My eyes wandered around as I sipped my tea.

I looked upon my hostess with unabashed admiration. I was sure she would be congenial. She was a well-built English lady, a graduate nurse from Bristol, who had served in South Africa during the second Boer War. During service there she first met Mr. Ray. Stray locks of dark wavy hair fringed her white forehead—locks that reached a coil at the back of her head. Two dark bright eyes revealed sympathy; a splendid English complexion, clear with rosy cheeks. A pleasant manner and ready humour frequently giving vent to laughter presaged pleasantry. I noted a plain-fitting but very neat dress of some expensive woollen material; a brooch at the neck and a couple of



*The teacher, Miss Griffis, in borrowed Eskimo dress.*

good rings on her hand completed her ornaments. A well-modulated English voice, trained in a private girls' school, was a splendid asset. I noted that all the members of the staff were either English or Scottish.

As I glanced through the open door into the kitchen, there was Lame Annie, the cook, tall and bony, covered with a print dress and apron to match. She reminded me of a disabled ship lagging on the starboard side. Now and then she lurched and occasionally anchored by the kitchen stove, the final port of her activities.

(Later on, Annie became a good friend and I found her father had been born in Selkirk, Manitoba, and married a York Factory Indian, Kate Redsky. Lame Annie described him as "a white man, Scotch him. Red hair on his head and face, a carpenter, but good hunter and fisherman." On one rare occasion, Mrs. Ray and I returned late for supper, when my watch stopped while we were out walking. We waited till supper was finished and then Mrs. Ray insisted that we go in for we were both hungry. Unfortunately Mr. Ray came in and saw us, and he was furious. He ordered: "Don't ever let this occur again, or you'll be sent out like a couple of five-year-olds." Lame Annie said afterwards: "I seed yo' late t'other night comin' to supper. Ho, ho, the master dud no lak dat! Most masters of the Comp'ny's posts is lak kings yo'll soon larn. Yo kin be birthed and died widout his consent but dat's 'bout all!")

Mary Ann Bluecoat, the healthy looking waitress, solicitous of our welfare stood by the buffet, her left arm elbowed on it, her large black eyes riveted on the table. Her straight black hair like Lame Annie's was plaited in two strands and coiled like tarred rope at the nape of the neck then tied at two ends one behind each ear. Mary Ann's bright red print dress was tight waisted with large buttons and button holes running at regular intervening distances to the waist-



York Factory public school pupils, with the Anglican church on right.

Archdeacon Faries

line where a full skirt hung in ample folds to her broad ankles. A full white apron was tied in a generous bow at the back. The flowing ends fluttered like the restless wings of a bird as she sailed around the table. A deep frill of white lace round her neck was held in place by a cheap conspicuous brooch. Then came a row of graduating blue beads, large in the centre and tapering to the size of peas in the back. The third finger of her right hand displayed a large plain brass ring. Both servants wore beaded deer-skin moccasins.

The only other lady present at the table besides Mrs. Ray and myself was Miss Mary Anderson, the governess, who sat at Mr. Ray's left. She was a tall, graceful, English lady, crowned with an immense head of fair hair, which she artistically arranged at the back of her head. Two light eyes were kind and sympathetic, her face delicately refined. She, too, had a pronounced English accent—a voice low and sweet. Her clothes were of good English texture and style. I soon discovered her thin tapering fingers were very capable especially at knitting and her feet like those of most English women, capable of tramping long distances without fatigue.

Fearing the impossibility of a Manitoba public school teacher's arrival for another year, the Hudson's Bay Company had sent Miss Anderson to teach the Ray children. On being introduced to her, I was much impressed by her friendly manner and made a ready decision we would have much in common, particularly since she had taught school in England. She seemed to fit in admirably with the Ray family circle. The children she adored and her affection was reciprocated. I found out upon acquaintance they were a polite, very well trained family of children. Although not teaching them the first year there I took an interest in them at once.

George, the eldest, was a fair-haired, blue-eyed freckly-faced lad of about eleven at the time. Marjorie about nine was the image of her mother, a robust pleasant child with a smile for everyone. Kasba a blond in the neighbourhood of seven had been given a name meaning white partridge in the Indian Chipewyan language. She had been born at Churchill. Both girls' locks were combed upwards on the sides to the crown where the hair was fastened with a large blue silk bow resembling the regal fritillary butterfly. Gauzy frills rippled on their summer dresses. Maudie, under school age, was fair and frail, with dark eyes and fair hair. Her butterfly bow was pink but resembled in shape the rosy maple moth. She, too, wore a frilly gauzy garment. Bertie, about three was a sturdy little boy with a temper all his own which he was not slow in exhibiting when displeased.

Failure in the arrangements for my reception naturally added somewhat to my depression. I tried to push it aside as one does a curtain obstructing the sun to no avail. The atmosphere around me was permeated with an unexpected formality—selected phraseology that made one feel it was as well to turn one's thoughts over a couple of times first and then send them out in their Sunday clothes, best boots polished. I felt that way somehow. By the time the last swallow of tea had disappeared my answers to questions were briefer than ever.

Supper was over before a light was required for it was about the twentieth of August. No electricity! Coal-oil lamps! Tall, short, fat, thin, even squatty ones with a little handle. Both glass and brass—old fashioned and new-styled, some that had served generations, others lately arrived to take the place of those done serving.

An old-fashioned brass hanging lamp suspended from the ceiling in the living room was visible through an open



door as we passed out in single file. The Ray family and Miss Anderson all remained standing during our exit. I looked out of the corner of my left eye at Mr. Ray who stood near Horatio Nelson's picture. The factor's hand was resting on the back of his chair. His face was as immobile as the one in the frame. Authority was stamped on his face as plainly as the word on a printed page. I mingled a sigh of relief with the rain-soaked air as I whirled to the right soon disappearing into my own humble quarters to worry about more unpacking.

When I was first ushered to my room I was informed the late Hon. Frank Cockrane, the Dominion Minister of Railways and Canals had occupied the room the previous night and had just departed that forenoon for Port Nelson, the place the dominion government was then planning to make the terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway. Whoever removed the sheets and pillow case, if there had been any on, had neglected to replace clean ones.

Left alone I sat down a few minutes on the edge of the home-made wooden bed and surveyed my surroundings. The first thing that caught my eye was the large iron box stove. In the wooden partition that separated my room from the room in front, an opening had been cut, through which protruded into my domain, the posterior of this stove, so placed to serve two rooms at the same time. I had the rear end without a damper. The whole thing reminded me of some frustrated animal that had backed up through the wall and then paused leaving its haunches and two short squatty hindlegs and a large round black tail that shot up through the low ceiling. The walls were built of ceiling material, as they were throughout the house. There was not an inch of wall paper or plaster anywhere. The bare walls and ceiling in the room were painted a dull blue and the wide rough flooring had received a dark yellow coat some indefinite time in the past. A home-made table stood between the one small window and a corner. The roller on the window blind was on strike. On the table was the little star-lamp and some matches. Near the table was a yellow-painted kitchen chair. It was placed between the table and my rough-hewn wash-stand that supported a grey enamel wash basin and jug with a bar of toilet soap and towel. The stand was within easy reach of the bed which occupied the corner opposite the table. The bed was in keeping with the other furniture definitely Spartan in character. Its home-made wooden slats held a straw mattress and a small feather tick, covered with two grey blankets and a sleeping robe on top. There was no dearth of covering.

Once in bed, I lay listening to rain pelting on the roof, wind moaning weirdly, and Company's huskies howling. Then, mice began scampering hither and thither around

the room. Some began gnawing. Judging by the wild hilarity followed by the festivities of those carousing rodents I was certain they were concluding with a frolicsome barn-dance in spite of my violent protestations. I covered my ears and sank into a coma.

The following day I was conducted on a tour by Mr. Ray. The fort proper covered a relatively small area, and was laid out in a kind of rough square fenced about with wire. Five gateways led into the enclosure, two on the side facing the river, and one in each of the other three sides of the square. The main approach from the dock on the river-bank where we landed upon our arrival, was by way of a wide board walk, flanked by a pair of ancient cannons. To the left of the walk, as one faced the fort, stood a white marble sundial. On the same side, nearer the entrance, was planted a lofty flag-pole from which, in fine weather, fluttered the HBC flag. Directly opposite the gateway, in the middle of the fort, stood the big two-storeyed fur depot, with its three-storey central tower and lookout, and with the Company's store housed in one end. To the right of this building were a number of small store-houses, fashioned of logs, and beyond them, sacred to the males of York Factory, Bachelors' Hall. This too was a log structure, of generous proportions, with a door and two large windows facing on the street. We stepped inside for a moment, where I found myself in a games room furnished with a large billiard table, easy chairs, a library table and a box stove. On the same side of the square, a few yards beyond Bachelors' Hall, was the factor's residence. Like most of the other buildings, this was a one-storey log structure, but in this instance the walls were sided with lumber. There were two doors in front facing on a common porch. One of these led directly into the Ray's home (and mess-room off their hall). The other opened into a narrow corridor off which on the left two doors appeared—the second of these opened into my room. Miss Anderson the governess had the other. Finally we reached the factor's office, a large room of no special distinction, filled with tables, desks and filing cabinets, and with a long wooden counter running across one end.

"And now," said Mr. Ray, when we were inside, "If you don't mind I'll ask you to sign the oath of allegiance."

"Oath of allegiance?" I laughed, in sheer surprise. "But to what, or whom?"

"To the Hudson's Bay Company," returned Mr. Ray with dignity. "It obliges you to promise never to purchase any fur excepting for your personal use, and never to betray any business information that might come into your possession."

With a sigh of relief and considerable secret amusement, I signed the impressive document. ♦

# WE CLOMB THE PATHLESS PASS

BY R. M. PATTERSON  
who photographed this Rocky  
Mountain pass last year.



SOME twelve miles south of the town of Jasper, Alberta, and close to the main Lake Louise highway, the Whirlpool River flows into the Athabasca. Cars and their human freight rush past this confluence unheeding, but the rare motorist who pauses and walks down to the water's edge may well reflect that he stands on historic ground. For it was at this spot that the old trail of the fur-traders crossed the Athabasca River and took off up the Whirlpool for the Athabasca Pass—and beyond to Wood River and Boat Encampment on the Columbia. A trail that is now rarely used, in places fallen-in and hard to find, but once a highway plainly marked by the feet of hundreds of men and horses. Fur-trader and priest; botanist, artist, and surveyor, they all went that way in the early days, and they travelled that rough road because they had to: there was no other practicable way to navigable water on the Columbia, and the Piegiens had closed the Howse Pass to the south.

The east end of the portage, the meeting of the waters, is, according to Alexander Ross, who crossed the pass with George Simpson in 1825, "at a place called the Hole, from the depth of the water at the edge of the bank, the Athabasca being unfathomable there. Punch Bowl Creek [the Whirlpool River of today], swelled at last to the size of a moderate river . . . discharges itself into the Athabasca at the Hole." Since the North Westers were first on the scene most of the names were originally French: the Hole was le Trou and the Whirlpool was la Rivière du Trou. From the Hole to the west end of the portage—to Portage Point on the bank of the Columbia, later to be known as Boat

*The Big Bend of the Columbia River at flood time. The spruce is on the point between the Columbia, flowing in from left, and Wood River flowing in from right.*



Encampment—is forty-five miles as the crow flies; and on that, too, our motorist can reflect as he climbs back into his car and drives away south, since for him, by road to Boat Encampment, it will be close on three hundred.

But miles as the crow flies are not to be met with in the mountains. Alexander Ross estimated the distance at eighty-five miles. George Simpson made it a bit less: on 19 October 1824 he noted that they arrived at Boat Encampment "having disposed of the celebrated Athabasca Portage, which altho not exceeding from Jaspers House 120 miles and from Henrys House 80 to 90 occupied us six Days in crossing." That would make the distance from the Hole seventy-five miles; and, having myself carried a heavy pack down the Whirlpool in summer last year—crossing and re-crossing the river on foot, balancing on logs and tussocks in the swampy places, turning and twisting in the bush and around the deadfall—I am inclined to agree with that estimate. Simpson made that October trip with horses, but even so things were not easy. Eight inches of snow fell on his party in the night at l'Encampement du Fusil, a meadow on the upstream side of the stony wash of Kane Creek. Above the battures, or gravel flats, of the Whirlpool much of the trail is bad going, and Simpson writes: "towards the height of land the Road is as bad and dangerous as it can well be and Glaciers are seen which have bidden defiance to the rays of the Sun since the beginning of time." To the voyageurs there was nothing friendly about these mountain fastnesses. Rather was there something hostile and appalling in the snowy peaks and alpine solitudes—and Ross Cox, camped in early June of 1817 on the height of land, writes: "One of our rough-spun, unsophisticated Canadians, after gazing upwards for some time in silent wonder, exclaimed with much vehemence, 'I'll take my oath, my dear friends, that God Almighty never made such a place!'"

In the whole history of the Canadian fur-trade there can be few trails that have occasioned so much physical effort and endurance as has that of the Athabasca Portage. Back east the voyageurs could remember Grand Portage and could boast of their feats of carrying on Portage la Loche. But there were well-beaten trails over these, steep though they were, and no drowning rivers to ford and ford again, no alpine pass at timberline. And in the west there were other passes over the Great Divide—one of them only forty miles away to the northwest, the route by the Miette River and Buffalo Dung Lake, later to be known as Yellowhead Lake. But this pass, though 2,000 feet lower than the Athabasca Pass, led only to the rough headwaters of the Fraser and the New Caledonia posts.

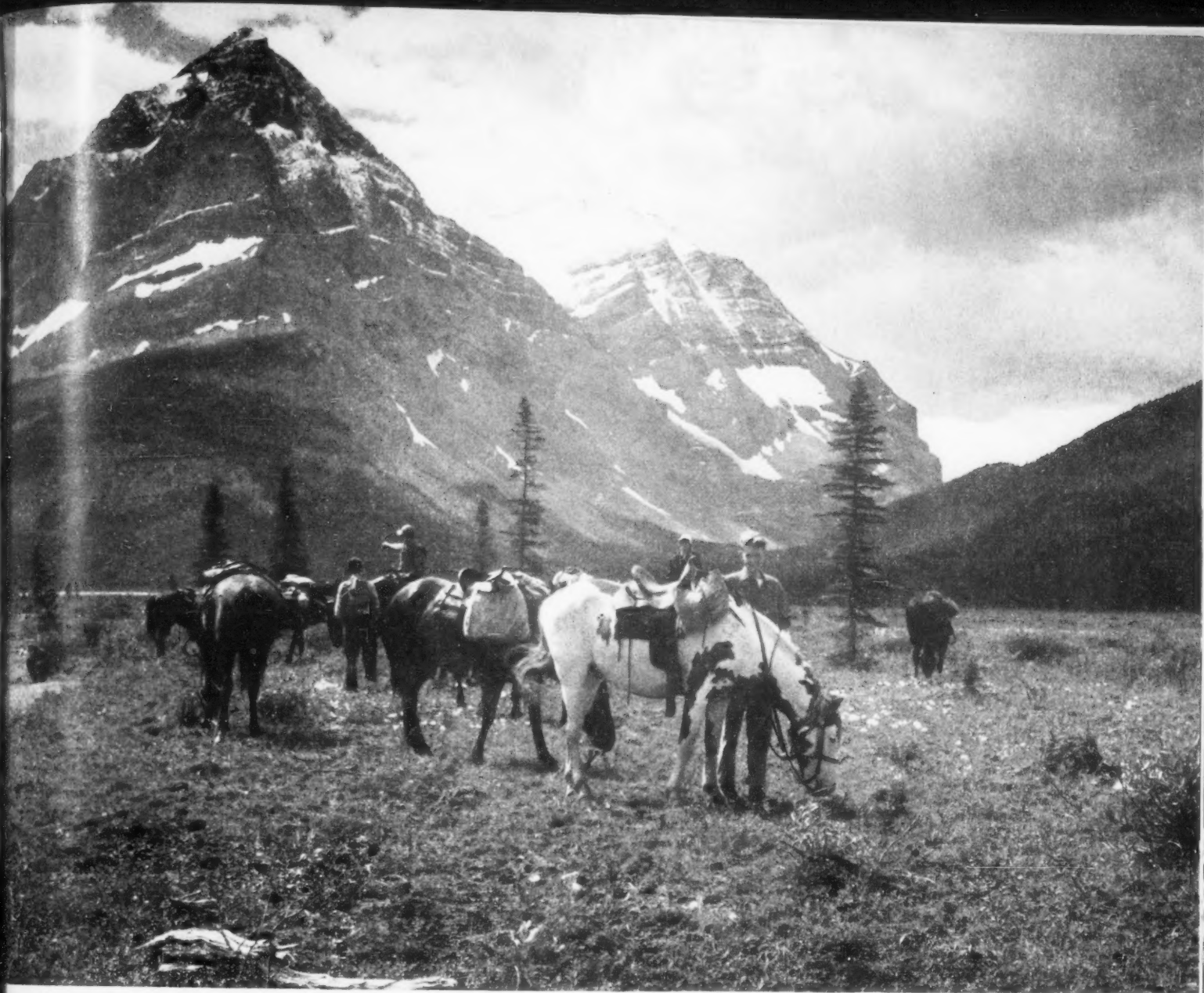
About the Athabasca Portage, however, there was something dramatic, some epic quality that inspired many

of the men who travelled it to write the saga of its trail. It lay, too, on the very life-line of the fur trade. Eastward in April or May came the express from Fort Vancouver, men wading in icy water, toiling upwards in deep wet snow. Westward in October came the express from York Factory and the newcomers to the Columbia—their horses slipping and stumbling in the narrow defiles below Kane Creek, snatching at the grass in the lovely meadows north of the Committee's Punch Bowl, sliding dangerously down the Grande Côte to the gravel bars of Wood River. Edward Ermatinger came that way from the east in early October of 1827 with a fifty-four-horse outfit. He knew the trail well, having crossed over that very spring with the express from Fort Vancouver to York Factory, and he had perfect weather. With these advantages it took him only four days from the Hole to Portage Point; and that included picking up various odds and ends on the way—one of his hunters a grizzly by the Punch Bowl, and another a marten on the Grande Côte. Coming through the points of woods and the swampy three miles towards the Columbia River, his fifty-four horses, he says, churned the trail into "one mire from beginning to end."

The hardest traverse was from west to east, since that was made almost always on foot and included the ascent of the Grande Côte—the Big Hill where the trail climbed

*The Committee's Punch Bowl, at the Alberta outlet, looking towards the British Columbia outlet.*





*On the Grande Batture of the Whirlpool River, looking southwest, upstream.*

steeply for 3,000 feet from the battures of Wood River into the alpine country. And the worst season was the spring, the months of April and May when the snow still lay deep and soggy in the bush on Wood River, and the high meadows by the Punch Bowl were still under eight or ten feet of wind-packed snow. On this the travellers had to make their camps, and into it their fires sank while they slept, forming fire-pits with vertical walls of yellow, smoke-stained ice.

Leaving Fort Vancouver about the first of April, the fur-traders would ascend the Columbia River by canoe to the very tip of the Big Bend and there, on Portage Point which is between the mouths of Wood and Canoe Rivers and some two miles from the modern highway, they would lay up their canoes, cache all they did not need or could not carry, and arrange their loads—90 pounds for the Company plus a man's blanket and gun and whatever else he carried for himself. When all was done and an inventory made of the cached stuff they started up Wood River, which then was Portage River.

They started with three miles of swampy ground, and then they hit the First Point of Woods—a place where there is no passage on the opposite bank and where the timber on the trail side comes right to the water's edge. Through this bush they had to struggle with their loads—those who had them using their *pas d'ours*, their bear-paw snowshoes. Edward Ermatinger writes that "the road being hard to find wastes time," and suggests that the horse party in the fall blaze the trees plainly from their saddles high up above snow level. As that was in April of 1827, the year he returned in October with the fifty-four horses, no doubt he had it done.

Then they came to a six-mile stretch of open gravel flats, or battures, through which the Portage River flows swiftly in many channels, winding from wall to wall of the valley. Here they had to ford continuously, and they travelled in the icy water almost as much as they did on the bars. Alexander Ross marked these traverses of Portage River on his staff: by nightfall on the first day he had notched up sixty-two crossings—and there were a few





*McGillivray's Rock and the Kane Glacier. The Punch Bowl and Pass are at the foot of the 'tower' of the Rock.*

earlier ones not recorded! On this same stretch of flats the Governor, George Simpson, records fording the main stream forty-one times. In order to breast the strong current they formed a chain with a tall and strong man in the lead, then a small man, and then a big one again and so on. Their heavy loads helped to anchor them against the rushing water, and if a small man was swept off his feet the giants on either side were there to hold him. This living chain would enter the water diagonally to the course of the river so that the full force of the current would not strike vertically on the chain and so break it in the middle. The water was the spring run-off—melting snow and ice—and sometimes their clothes froze on them between fordings; but they had no choice of ways and so drove themselves on, knowing that beyond the mountains horses and canoes awaited them.

It was on these battures that some of the Iroquois got drunk, and one threw his load of provisions into the river. The Governor's reactions were not slow: soaked, half frozen and enraged, he took a hatchet and smashed a keg of rum into the river also—just to show “the people” precisely on which side their bread was buttered. We hear no more of trouble.

The next day on that trip of Simpson's was 24 April 1825. They got through the Second Point of Woods and to the second stretch of battures, where they forded the river seventeen times before 6 a.m. Then they tackled the

Grande Côte and got to the top of the hill at 5 p.m. after twelve hours walking, “every Man in the Camp lame and exhausted.”

It was Gabriel Franchère, the Astorian, who found the vivid phrase for the arduous travel in the park-like country above the Big Hill. At 6,000 feet the snow lay deep and soft in May, 1814, and Franchère writes: “We were obliged to follow exactly the traces of those who had preceded us, and to plunge our legs up to the knees in the holes they had made, so that it was as if we had put on and taken off, at every step, a very large pair of boots.” Franchère was impressed by the great rock that towers above the pass on the northeast: it was “like a fortress of rock,” he says, “and had the summit covered with ice.” That was McGillivray's Rock—named, Ross Cox notes, in honour of William McGillivray, a principal director of the North West Company. That is by no means certain: a strong case can be made out that it was named for William's younger brother, Duncan, who may have crossed the Athabasca Pass some ten years ahead of David Thompson, the official discoverer in 1811.

Another commentator on the tremendous depth of snow was John McLeod who travelled east through the Athabasca Pass with the express in late April of 1826. His young son, Malcolm, was also of the party. They left Boat Encampment on April 27th and John McLeod notes in his diary: “Snow so deep, obliged to cut our leather

trousers into snow shoes." Malcolm records that the snow was fifteen feet deep at the foot of the pass and thirty at the summit. His father wrote: "We clomb the pathless Pass: resting at night literally, at times, on the tops of the trees." To the east of the Divide the "snow diminished fast in depth till at Jasper House it was nearly gone . . . arrived 5 May, just a week in the struggle . . . even the boy suffered not."

Returning now to Simpson's 1825 party, they left their high camp at 3.30 a.m., roused by the thunder of avalanches, and they came at 6 o'clock to the Committee's Punch Bowl, the little lake that sits right on the Divide and sends its waters in opposite directions to two far distant oceans. That was the summit of the Athabasca Pass, 5,724 feet above the level of the sea, and there, according to custom, "the people had a Glass of Rum each and ourselves a little Wine and Water which was drunk to the Health of their Honors with three Cheers. At 9 got to the Camp<sup>1</sup> Fusil where we put up to breakfast and rested till 12 A.M." And at six in the evening they made camp on the Grande Batture, "every Man of the party knocked up." They must have been men of iron to get that far under those conditions and with those loads.

The Grande Batture of the Whirlpool River is good walking, open and level, covered with a soft mat of the dryas flower. But, though the snow was less deep, they were not yet down to bare ground, and Simpson writes

under April 26th: "Never did exhausted travellers turn out less disposed to renew a toilsome Journey then we did at 3 o'clock this Morn<sup>g</sup>, every man . . . requiring the aid of a Walking Stick our feet being much blistered and Lacerated by the rough Travel on the Battures and in the Bed of the River; we however improved as we got Warm upon it . . ." But their troubles were coming to an end, for at 10 a.m., having already forded the Rivière du Trou



Mt. Hooker, right, and Mt. Ermatinger left, at the head of Scott Glacier, from the Grande Batture. Whirlpool River runs accross the meadow looking like a narrow trench.

twenty-seven times, they came to l'Encampement d'Original (the Halfway Camp of today near the forks of the Middle Whirlpool) and there they found two men waiting for them with the horses. Gratefully they breakfasted, mounted and rode on towards the still distant Hole.

They rode far—and the following day found them away down the Athabasca at what Alexander Ross calls Rocky Mountain House—which was Jasper's House. There an old North Wester was in charge, Joseph Felix Larocque, and there they took to canoes. "Wherever there is a north-wester in this country," Ross writes, "the birch-rind canoe is sure to be found. Although boats would have been far more safe and suitable for our purpose, yet we had to embark in those fragile shells to shoot a dangerous stream."

No matter: safe or unsafe, they were on their way—afloat once more on the element that was home to them, and in the frail craft that had given them the mastery of it. The Athabasca Portage lay behind them. ♦

The boundary monument on the divide which runs through the Committee's Punch Bowl. To the left Alberta, right B.C.



# NORTHERN BOOKS

## MISSION AMONG THE BUFFALO

by James Ernest Nix

Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1960.  
114 pages. \$3.50.

Reviewed by Richard Glover

IN this book's 114 pages the Rev. James Nix describes the work of the Wesleyan missionaries, George M. McDougall and John C. McDougall, in the Canadian Northwest, 1860-1876.

One wishes Mr. Nix had allowed himself more space to describe his subjects' vast parish. Wisely, he gives a neat, clear map which shows the country from Fort Garry to the Morley Mission west of Calgary and from the U.S. border to the Victoria Mission north of Edmonton, but it lacks an indication of the approximate boundaries of the Indian tribes, the Woodland and Plains Crees, the Stoneys and the Blackfeet. Something more than the bare three pages of the book allotted to all these, and to the Metis, would have helped our understanding of his text; so would a sketch of the general history of the west from Palliser's expedition through the Red River troubles of 1869-70 to the establishment of Canadian rule on the prairies. Mr. Nix has still, however, produced a good book.

The country and its conditions are known to some readers from the accounts of the Earl of Southesk, Dr. Cheadle and Captain Butler. None of these had any particular praise for Wesleyan missionaries; Southesk explicitly disliked the lack of gentlemanliness and of education he found in the McDougalls' predecessors. But education was hard to come by, and John McDougall, who hungered for it, was denied it by his church. What the McDougalls lacked in scholarship, they made up in devotion and energy. Neither Indian wars nor the brutality of dissolute miners and American whisky peddlers intimidated them. They mastered Indian languages and followed St. Paul in being all things to all men. They "companied with [the Indians] in sorrow and in joy . . . hunted and trapped and fished, and engaged in all manner of athletics, foot races, horse races, anything for fun and common brotherhood." Thus they

won the Indians' confidence, and, by doing that, were enabled to perform real service in establishing both church and government in the West.

Mr. Nix makes the point that we have to thank the missionaries as well as the Hudson's Bay Company and the Mounted Police for the fact that Canadian graveyards contain no such epitaph as one which he quotes from south of the border. It reads: "To Lem S Frame, who during his life shot 89 Indians whom the Lord delivered into his hands, and who was looking forward to making up his hundred before the end of the year, when he fell asleep in Jesus at his house at Hawkes Ferry, March 27, 1843."

*Dr. Glover, professor of history at the University of Manitoba, has written for the Hudson's Bay Record Society and many times for The Beaver.*

## GUNS OF THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

by Ruby El Hult

Washington State Historical  
Society, Tacoma, Wash. Historical  
Pamphlet No. 1. 1960. 16 pages.  
Illus. \$1.00.

Reviewed by R. W. Sutton

TOO often, when a historical society enters the field of publication it expends its funds on lengthy reminiscences in which most of the meat is concealed by the parsley. And it costs just as much to print parsley as it does meat. Happily, this present slender volume presents us with a concise, factual coverage of the material indicated in its title. It should, in fact, serve as a model for other societies planning their own publications.

The author first tells us of the planning of the 1803 expedition headed by Capt. Meriwether Lewis and Capt. William Clark, and we are given details of the arms and accoutrements requisitioned from the U.S. Army. Then follows the interesting account of how the expedition was fitted out with the new Harper's Ferry flintlock rifle—so new that its manufacture for the army had not even been authorized.

A full discussion of other firearms carried, and various incidents of their use is interspersed with notes on types of bullets, flints, field care of guns, and so on.

On one point I must quibble. The author states that "according to the U.S. Ordnance Manual of 1841, flints were issued to the troops in the proportion of one to twenty rounds." She then points out that since the expedition carried only 625 gunflints, this would permit each man only one shot per day during the three year journey. True, the U.S. Ordnance Manual does say that one flint per twenty rounds is what the troops were issued. But it also says "a good musket flint will last for more than 50 fires." In addition to this, any man accustomed to handling the flintlock would be well acquainted with the method of re-facing a worn gunflint. I doubt if the supply of gunflints was at all inadequate.

This, as stated before is mere quibbling. Actually this pamphlet, is an excellent source of information, with just enough in the way of anecdote to make it human and entertaining. Six photographs serve to illustrate the type of armament in use at that time.

*Mr. Sutton is director of the Manitoba Museum, with a particular interest in firearms.*

## AN ESKIMO GRAMMAR OF THE EAST AND WEST COASTS OF HUDSON BAY

by A. E. Spalding

Queen's Printer, Ottawa. 1960.  
250 pages. \$1.00.

MR. Spalding has obviously made an exhaustive study of the Eskimo dialects on the east and west coasts of Hudson Bay and has also spent a great deal of time organizing his work and indexing it for speedy reference. Mr. Spalding is certainly to be congratulated on his academic approach to a language which, up to the present time, has, for lack of reference books, been learnt by the few white people interested, directly from the Eskimos by word of mouth.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Spalding's work appears at a time when the Eskimo

language is losing its interest for the white residents of the Arctic and, undoubtedly, will be little used by the Eskimos themselves in the next generation or so. English is the language being taught in all Eskimo schools and, in fact, few teachers have any knowledge of Eskimo or wish to acquire it.

The Eskimo himself is now beginning to realize the great advantage to him of speaking English. With this knowledge, more jobs are available to him and he is sought after by the white residents as an interpreter. This is a far cry from the day not so long ago when the Eskimo was so proud of his race and language that he took the stand that if the white people wished to communicate with him, they must learn his language. The comparatively few whites who speak Eskimo well today, learnt it orally under the painstaking and encouraging tutelage of the Eskimos themselves. Mr. Leo Manning to whom Mr. Spalding has dedicated his work learnt to speak Eskimo fluently without the aid of textbooks. What a great help Mr. Spalding's work would have been if it had been produced some twenty years ago. As it is, it is doubtful whether it will be used extensively as learning the Eskimo language is no longer a requirement or need for any southern Canadians going north to live and work with the Eskimo.—  
*John Felton.*

### ONE MAN'S PLEASURE

by Hugh Fosburgh

Illustrated by Walter W. Ferguson

William Morrow, New York.

1960. 191 pages. \$4.00.

Reviewed by Calvin Rutstrum

FIVE thousand acres of forest land, with a half dozen ponds or lakes, and a rock-strewn clearing . . . " . . . in the Adirondack Mountains of Northern New York State . . . " . . . owned jointly by fifteen of us . . . " quoting fragments from the author's introduction, briefly describes the setting for this book. With a small set of exceptions, it could well be superimposed upon any frontier forest area.

Written as a four-season diary—a common escape route from editors who demand a well-patterned web of continuity—the book should be picked up and read at leisure intervals in many instalments, otherwise the style palls.

Mr. Fosburgh is a writer of fiction, and while *One Man's Pleasure* is featured as non-fiction, one senses a strong fictional treatment of its characters, especially those men with bark on them who bear down hard on short pencils. This is not objectionable—a licence of honest dramatization which most of us approve.

On May 12th of Mr. Fosburgh's diary he is inspired. Perhaps the spring outlook with its promise of birth and growth, brings resentment of slaughter, carnage and ravage by "sportsmen." Here are four pages of excellent writing, mature, straight thinking—a love for the wilderness. He explodes with vigour the fallacy that sportsmen have a sense of decency in the control of wildlife, or that they are red-blooded men who pursue the out-of-doors with a wholesome, rugged lust for living in the open. He views them for the most part (and their general conduct testifies to the truth of this view) as phlegmatic, guide-nursed individuals "who know nothing of red blood except that they delight in letting it."

The first part of the book, delightfully written, holds a bold promise of analyzing this national psychosis of trigger-happy sportsmen who exclude true wilderness pleasure for the panic and scramble of a few days of blood letting. You also have the feeling that the author will lead you into the realm of the inscrutable forest. And so, through the first part of this book he does, with humour, levity, and almost self-effacing humility. Then something happens.

Through a large part of the second half of the book, he proceeds with his own carnage, and qualifies his slaughter of wildlife on the value of his own technique or on circumstantial grounds. By the same devious thinking revised to fit his own circumstances, the sportsman qualifies his abysmal slaughter. Thus, we find the incongruous duality of a singing wilderness theme, marred by the author's drop in later pages to a wilderness culture on the level of the abattoir. Here again is the strange manifestation that man believes he must share by a process of slaughter in the balance of Nature. His resultant failure in this respect has been a sad and tragic commentary on his rationality, and certainly in general evidence a worse commentary on his ecological sense.

A high light in Mr. Fosburgh's book is the attention he gives to Winslow Homer, the artist, who glorified with his

immortal paintings the ground around Mink Pond, a part of this book's setting. This is a valuable contribution to the unfortunately limited material on this great artist. Despite some inconsistency, *One Man's Pleasure* is nevertheless a worthwhile contribution to the outdoor library.

Mr. Rutstrum, author of "Way of the Wilderness" is recognized for his exceptional knowledge of wilderness life.

### THE OXFORD BOOK OF CANADIAN VERSE

Chosen by A. J. M. Smith

Oxford University Press, Toronto,  
1960. lvi, 445 pages. \$6.00.

THE Oxford Press has produced another fine book for our library shelves, and one much needed, in this anthology of Canadian poetry which includes French and English works, many appearing for the first time in volume form.

The field is covered selectively and chronologically, beginning in 1793. The greater part, inevitably, is modern, for Canada's maturity in poetry has been comparatively recent and about two-thirds of the book is given to poetry of the modern movement, published in the last thirty years.

One is grateful for the collection, and even more so for the introduction. A. J. M. Smith, poet, editor, and critic (and now most aptly a professor of English) was one of the Montreal group who had a great influence on Canadian poetry in the thirties. His knowledgeable introduction is a survey of Canadian poetry, from its crude immigrant beginnings to its present stage of sophistication, which should do much to encourage the appreciation that comes through understanding and familiarity. Professor Smith points out that the first Canadians had a heritage of poetry in their original French or English language—a handicap or advantage, according to the point of view—which naturally led to the traditional rather than original development of North American poetry. Canadian poetry he divides into three phases—the colonial, the national, and the cosmopolitan. He then takes the reader, with examples, through the periods of the backwoods versifiers, the emergence of a Canadian school, the classical romanticists of the late 19th century, the



resurgence of the mid-twenties, and the revival—or revolution—of the last two decades.

It is an excellent and concise summary, dealing with the personalities of many of the poets as well as evaluating their work; with the carefully chosen contents, the result is a survey of Canadian poetry of which to be proud.—M.B.

### WAGON ROAD NORTH

by Art Downs

Northwest Digest Ltd., Box 1238,  
Quesnel, B.C. 1960. 80 pages.  
\$2.00.

Reviewed by Douglas Leechman

THIS is probably the best summary of the great Cariboo gold rush that has yet been written. It does not pretend to add any new material to the facts already recorded, but it tells the story in great detail and illustrates it with a remarkable collection of photographs. The period covered is from the first discoveries of gold in the Kamloops area about 1852 to the time when hand-working the placer claims no longer was possible and heavy machinery had to be used to recover the gold in the deeper deposits.

Written in an easy, familiar style, it deals with the gold-bearing creeks, the claims and their yield, the trails and roads, freighting and packing, stage coaches, road houses, and the settlements of the Cariboo.

The last two sections show Barkerville as it is now and the restoration that is being undertaken by the province, and give a description of the Cariboo of present times,—one of the most beautiful and fascinating sections of British

Columbia. This is a book that may be compared with Ethel Becker's *Klondike '98*, and that should be acquired by everybody interested in the history of British Columbia.

### SPINDRIFT

by John T. Rowlands

Illustrated by Henry B. Kane

W. W. Norton, New York, 1960.  
232 pages. \$3.95.

IT is somewhat startling to find that Mr. Rowlands whom one has come to accept, on the strength of *Cache Lake Country*, as a staunch woodsman, has built himself a house by the sea, and the sea as so often happens induces reminiscence. People who build their own houses, particularly if they have unusual views as to what they want, run into many experiences unknown to those who merely buy a house or rent an apartment. And they like to tell others about them. This accounts for some of the author's jottings, but he is as keenly observant as ever and writes in a pleasant, rather haphazard way, about plants and lobster-pots, old shore houses and clam digging, cranberries and apple butter, and the turn of the seasons on the New England coast.

The second part of the book reverts to Mr. Rowlands' northern travels when, at his seaside home, the cry of a loon, geese on the wing, the shimmer of northern lights proved irresistible. As he sagely remarks: "You can take a man out of the North, but you never can take the North out of the man"—a sentiment familiar to anyone who has acquaintances in the Hudson's Bay Company. By car, train, and canoe he went to Moosonee and Moose Factory, ultimately to Han-nah Bay for a photographic session with

the geese and ducks. On the journey he happily met again the assorted people who bear the stamp of the North. Having paddled through that country many years before as a prospector, he was struck by many changes, in particular when the Indians set out down river for the season's trapping and only one of all the canoes moved by manpower.

Unfortunately since Mr. Rowlands was in Moose Factory there have been more changes and some of the old buildings that pleased him so much have vanished—landmarks washed away in the tide of progress. It is good that he saw and wrote about them when he did.—M.B.

### BLACKFOOT CROSSING

by Norma Sluman

Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1959.  
255 pages. \$4.50.

Reviewed by Douglas Leechman

HERE is one of the best presentations I have ever seen of the Prairie Indian culture as it was just before its collapse under white pressure. The life of these people was surely one of the most even and contented lives among all the tribes of Canada, with only the West Coast people and the Iroquois as possible rivals. It is a historical novel, well researched, and, while the hero and heroine are fictional, many of the other characters and events are true to fact. Here we have excellent and convincing portraits of Crowfoot and of Sitting Bull, Heavy Shield receives his share of attention, and Jerry Potts becomes a real person. How few of us realize that he still has descendants living in the west!

Norma Sluman's style is smooth and easy, with no road blocks to bring a reader up short, and few errors in detail; and more than a trace of nostalgia. She knows what these people lost and how pitifully little they got in return. She knows the people too, and the country they lived in, and her understanding, her affection, and her sympathy are easy to understand and to share.

The ending, a retreat into a never-never land in the mountains, which sounds remarkably like Banff in the pre-white days, is perhaps the best solution to a problem that can hardly be solved; a problem we are still wrestling with.

Dr. Leechman, archaeologist and former Director of Western Canadiana at Glenbow Foundation, now lives in B.C.

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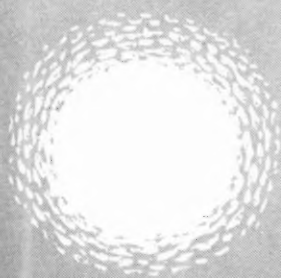
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*Richard Harrington photo*



The sun through icy air strings  
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